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THE GRAMMAR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE GRAMMAR OF PHILOSOPHY

A STUDY OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD

BY

DAVID GRAHAM

OF GRAY'S INN, BARRISTER-AT-LAW

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INSCRIBED TO
MY CONSTANT AND MUCH ESTEEMED FRIEND
OLIPHANT SMEATON

P R E F A C E

THE general purpose of the following work is to show that in the Human Mind we possess a sound basis of Knowledge; that our faculties faithfully used, are trustworthy and adequate to execute their legitimate work; that the special task of the philosopher is to collate and interpret the reports of his faculties to the best of his ability, and that the results thus obtained, are all we can have for knowledge. In other words, the *Grammar of Philosophy* is a development of what is commonly known as the Scottish Philosophy, and requires that we shall resolutely follow the guidance of the Common Sense whithersoever it leads, and as resolutely refuse to go where it does not lead. With Dr. M'Cosh, "I have no faith whatever in a metaphysic which pretends to do any more than determine in an inductive manner the laws and faculties of the mind, and in doing so, to ascertain, formulise and express the fundamental principles of cognition, belief, judgment and moral good." I am of opinion that the Bedlam confusions of the Schools, ancient and modern, have mainly arisen from their failure to observe and conform to the laws of this method; that a consistent and satisfactory theory of Knowledge and of Life can only be found in, established on, and illuminated by, the dictates and the sanctions of the Common Sense.

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GRAMMAR OF PHILOSOPHY



INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

“The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.”—PROV. xx. 15.

Universality of Human Interests.—Man is a being whose interests are universal. Beginning with his own soul, they extend into the depths of Space, and include everything that comes within his ken. He investigates molecules, he surveys the solar system; he speculates upon atoms, he weighs the Globe; he peers at microbes with a microscope and has visions of angels and archangels; he is subject to death and yet believes in immortality: so wide is the range of human interests.

Man is a Social Being.—Man is also a social being; and in obedience to the dictates of his nature, he delights to communicate with his fellow-beings on the things which engage his interest. As Reginald Scott long ago expressed it, “In mine own opinion, whosoever shall perform anything, or attain to any knowledge, or whosoever shall travel through all the nations of the world, or, if it were possible, should peep into the heavens, the consolation or admiration thereof were nothing pleasant to him unless he had liberty to impart his knowledge to his friends.”¹ So

¹ *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Ep. xix. So Aristotle:—“He that is incapable of society, or so complete in himself as not to want it, makes no part

much does he delight in knowledge and in communicating knowledge, or even what he takes to be knowledge, that in this age of letters, myriads of people not contented with oral facilities of communication, seriously commit their thoughts, their observations, their fancies, their musings, their speculations, their guesses to writing and to the creation of books: which may be regarded as containing the written expression of man's interest in himself, his affairs and his surroundings.

Knowledge is the food of the Mind.—We are all agreed with the pill-vendors and the sporting men as to the advantage of possessing healthy, well set-up bodies; but inasmuch as our minds are of higher significance than our bodies, it must, at a glance, be of still greater advantage to be the owners of healthy, well-poised minds, to obtain which, certain appropriate food and discipline will be necessary. “My son, get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding.” No cant nor claptrap in that advice, but soundness and rosy health; for lack of following which, the world welters in misery, and will continue to welter in misery until it appreciates the Solomonic precept more fully, and gets itself improved and strengthened in knowledge and understanding.

Leigh Hunt on the significance of knowledge.—In one of his papers, Leigh Hunt facetiously and happily brings out the significance of knowledge. A man, says he, “has no proof of his existence but in his consciousness of it and the return of that consciousness after sleep. He is therefore in amount of existence only so much as his consciousness, his thoughts and feelings amount to. The more

of a state, but is either a beast or a god.” *Politics*, Bk. i. c. 2 (Bohn tr.); and Cowper:—

“Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed. 'Tis there alone
His faculties expanded in full bloom
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.”

The Task, Bk. iv.

he knows the more he exists; and the pleasanter his knowledge, the happier his existence. One man in this sense of things, and it is a sense proved beyond a doubt (except with those merry philosophers of antiquity who doubted their very consciousness—nay, doubted doubt itself)—one man in this sense of things, “is infinitely little compared with another man. If we could see his mind we should see a pigmy; and it would be stuck perhaps into a pint of beer, or a scent-bottle, or a bottle of wine, as the monkey stuck Gulliver into the marrow bone. Another man’s mind would show larger; another, larger still; till at length we should see minds of all shapes and sizes, from a microscopic body to that of a giant or a demigod, or a spirit that filled the world. . . . Many a ‘great man’ would become invisible, and many a little one suddenly astonish us with the overshadowing of his greatness. Men sometimes by the magic of their knowledge partake of a great many things which they do not possess; others possess much which is lost upon them.”

Poor rich-men and rich poor-men.—To illustrate the case, he proceeds to contrast the mental status of a poor rich-man,—a dandy, and a rich poor-man. The dandy, he points out, would be “incapable of his own wealth; of his own furniture; of his own health, friends, books, gardens; nay, of his very hat and coat except in as much as they contributed to give him one single idea, to wit, that of his dandyism”: which is to say that our dandy while having legal and corporeal possession of such things, would have no mental possession of them, knowing nothing even of his books but that they “were bound and that they cost a great deal”;¹ whilst the rich poor-man, though having scarcely any property at all, in the ordinary sense of the word, might be, as it were, in mental possession of all things. Such a one is in a position to say—I have the

¹ *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, April 2nd.

Universe to look upon when I will; that shall be my Æsthetic Gallery.

In short, some men are infinitely inferior to their terrestrial wealth; others, infinitely above it. Some are poverty-stricken amid golden spoons; others, wealthy behind horn table-appointments. True wealth is, in the right sense, a mental and spiritual property. Its measure is to be gauged by our faculty and desire of entering into communion with Divine and High Beings and into the contemplation of great things—as when the Psalmist declared that he would rather keep a door in the Temple of God than dwell in the tents of sin.

Many minds are so poverty-stricken, so debased, in their ignorance and grossness, that even the divinest scenery may move them no more than the sight of a wooden hoarding. They are no more struck with the majesty of Creation than a fly: accordingly, for æsthetical purposes at least, they are no better than a fly.

The world is lying in stupidity as well as wickedness.—This world is lying in stupidity as well as wickedness. It may even be that stupidity,—mental confusion, is the strongest ally of wickedness. At all events it reigns over a terrible kingdom,—a kingdom full of darkness, like that of the Beast in Holy Writ; and until this kingdom be overthrown, or at least weakened, the Throne of Wickedness is likely to remain firmly fixed.

Just consider how stupidity cramps and curses human life, public and private, in every sphere of activity, for it is not Gotham only that is a village of foolish persons. The breed is far more widely spread—is to be found in every age and in every clime under Heaven.

Stupidity of the pseudo-scientific.—In the scientific world, for example, there is to be found stupidity of the greatest density. That remarkable man, David, king of Israel, thought in his day that the Heavens declared the

glory of God and that the firmament showed His handiwork; that day unto day uttered speech and that night unto night showed knowledge, and that there was no speech nor language where their voice was not heard. Happily some people still think that this is a fairly reasonable view of the matter; but it appears that some of our scientific friends think quite the contrary, in spite of David of Israel and other notable persons—think, in short, that the Universe is very badly made, indeed! Listen to Mr. Cotter Morison on the subject. “Bacon’s famous maxim,” says he, “that a little knowledge inclineth men’s minds to Atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth back men’s minds to religion *is now being reversed.*” Mark the terrible words. “The early glimpses of the marvels of nature afforded by modern science,” he continues, were undoubtedly “favourable to natural theology in the first instance. Knowledge revealed so many wonders which had not been expected by ignorance that a general increase of awe and reverence for the Creator was the natural, though not very logical, consequence.” (!) “But a deeper philosophy, or rather biology, has rudely disturbed the satisfaction with which ‘the wisest and most exquisite ends’ were once regarded. It is now known that for *one* case of successful adaptation of means to ends in the animal world, there are *hundreds* of failures. . . such are the rudimentary organs in plants and animals, the design of which seems only to point to an unintelligent designer”! ¹ Thus while the great king

¹ *Service of Man*, pp. 16-17. With Mr. Morison’s eccentric remarks compare the view of Professor Owen who probably knew more of Nature than fifty Morisons combined:—“Everywhere in organic nature,” he says, “we see the means not only subservient to an end, but that end accomplished by the best means.” Amongst recent writers M. Maeterlinck makes some good remarks on the same subject:—“There are moments when what seems error to us (in the operations of Nature) comes forth from this common source. But although we know very few things, proofs abound that the seeming error was in reality an act of prudence that we at first could not grasp. In the little circle even that our eyes embrace, we are constantly shown that what we regarded as Nature’s blunder close by, was due to her deeming it

of Israel and other considerable philosophers beautifully thought, and could scarcely but think, that they saw the glory of God declared in the Heavens, and His handiwork shown in the firmament, Mr. Morison was of opinion—so demented had he become through his mechanical theories, that the same universe was a very ill-contrived piece of work; so badly designed in fact, as to suggest to *him* that it had no designer at all—no more than if the whole macrocosm had blindly fallen through some large rubbish-shoot! And yet I believe he would most certainly have scoffed at anybody who might have asserted to him that his own waistcoat, or waistcoat-buttons even, had neither design nor designer. So inconsistent is mortal man; so stupid, so preposterous can he make himself amid his sin and ignorance.

Thus the cold soul of the flippant, cynical, atheistical and ignorant person has blotted out, as far as his own eyesight is concerned, all the divine grandeur that is visible round about him, and is actually found glorying, as it were, in this singular feat. Quoth a great Chinaman—"Some great calamity will befall those who have no abiding fear of that which ought to inspire awe."¹

Mr. Morison's Gospel of the Pig-trough.—It is but consonant with Mr. Morison's view—his "scientific" view, of things, that he should have had a very poor opinion of Religion, and that he should have anticipated in "a not distant future," a "general disappearance of Christianity from among the more advanced populations of the Globe."² And what was the Morisonian substitute for the Gospel of Christianity? Let us answer in his own words. "The

well to adjust the presumed inadvertence out yonder." *The Life of the Bee*, pp. 236-7. Such passages are worth the consideration of the atheistically disposed. Even Mr. Clodd allows that Nature's "contrivances" to secure the perpetuation of the species "are astounding." *The Story of Creation*, p. 84.

¹ Lao-Tsze: *The Táo-Tih-King*, c. 72 (Alexander's tr.).

² *Service of Man*, p. 178.

social revolution," he says, "is to be accomplished on secular principles. . . . The proletariat of Europe is resolved to have its fair share of the banquet of life, quite regardless of the good or bad things in store for it in the next world."¹ In short, the Morisonian hope seems to have been that the Gospel of Morality should be displaced by the Gospel of the Pig-trough and the Muck-rake. What appalling mental squalor seems to be revealed in such a thought!

We must, indeed, confess with Montaigne that "our condition is wonderfully corporeal"; but surely, surely, our human horizon is not, as Mr. Morison seems to have thought, bounded by a pig fence. If he was right, there can be no doubt at all that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were very great dunces; but I am hopeful that it will be found ultimately, at all events, that these renowned persons were not quite so thick-skulled as Mr. Morison took them to be. Unless where considerable stupidity prevails, I think it will even now be allowed that they announced a higher Gospel—defective though it was in some respects, than that of the Pig-trough.

In ancient history it is related of one Dicearchus, who had been in the naval service of Philip of Macedonia, that on a certain occasion he set up altars to Injustice and Impiety, and offered sacrifices on both with the view of insulting both Gods and Men. The Philosophy of the Pig-trough does not appear to be much more rational or respectful either to Gods or Men than the altars and sacrifices of Dicearchus.

In any case, if the late Mr. Morison had possessed any real and comprehensive knowledge of human nature or human wants, he would not have invited the human family away from the possibilities and prospects of a better World-to-come, to make brief sojourn with him upon his dunghill. Indeed had he possessed any real knowledge of magnitudes and eligibilities at all, he would have been heartily ashamed

¹ *Service of Man*, p. 193.

to deliver his invitation. Were that invitation to be generally accepted, even this world, whose secular banquet alone he disiderated, would in a short time become a dolorous den of infamy. Men would become so savage if they really tried to live upon the Morisonian Faith, that we should expect to hear them, at no distant date, grunting and growling at each other over their very food.

Adam's Ancestors.—It is also considered a proof of intelligence in these times to believe that Adam's parent was a fish, or a tailed beast of some kind or other. Pretend to believe in this hypothesis and you will pass for a man of brain; a man unprejudiced; one who knows a thing or two. Now if the wits of men were just sharpened a little, it seems not at all unlikely that this fishy hypothesis would vanish from their sight like steam in bright sunshine.

Stupidity of pseudo-political and social reformers.—In politics we are not more happily situated. Stupidity in that department of life very frequently carries the day. Through stupidity, nations frequently get dominated by tyrants on the one hand, or by vile demagogues or quacks on the other. In our own town and country, it is, by some, thought a right and proper thing that the man who knows little or nothing, and pays little or nothing to the public funds, should rule the councils of the Commonwealth in the very teeth of those who know more and pay the taxes. By some persons, it is now held to be the right thing that the well-to-do should provide pianos and fiddles for the ill-to-do. In many important matters we get ruled over by men who probably never had, and never will have, a good wash in all their lives—surely a most unenlightened and ugly arrangement.

A considerable section of British humanity are to-day excitedly and fiercely demanding that their neighbours shall be compelled to drink water only. They are proceeding upon too narrow a view of human nature, and their

enterprise cannot prosper. I heartily wish, however, that they could carry out part of their programme and compel all the crapulously disposed, all the very dry-throated, to drink water only, for drunkenness is certainly a most hideous and damnable offence. The *Regiam Majestatem*, it appears, says of it that *servitus sumpsit exordium ab ebrietate Noae*.¹

Stupidity of the pseudo-religious.—In Religion, as everybody knows, stupidity has reigned supreme almost since the time of Cain and Abel. Knowledge has ever been an offensive thing—more or less, to all the priesthoods of the world. But Solomon knew the worth of knowledge—knew that it could not be inimical to true Religion. “My son if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear to wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest for her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” This sounds like the real truth of the matter, but how do we stand? Theology has been to a large extent but another name for extravagant and ill-founded assertions concerning our relationships with the Deity. Intelligence as applied to our highest interests is audacity; reason is criminal; common sense is blasphemy. Down through history we see priests and theologians entering into conspiracy and rebellion against Common Sense; circumvallating themselves against knowledge; entrenching themselves within the Torres Vedras of stupidity. To this day they take bad lies for sacred truth, and condemn sacred truth as bad lies. To this day, manifold millions of Christians,—so called, try to deem it a religious thing well calculated to quell the wrath of God and subvert Satan, to eat eggs and other light foods on Fridays! It is a great wonder they don’t try to catch his Satanic Majesty with bird-lime. It

¹ Lord Hailes : *Annals of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 320.

is not surprising that the same kind of "Christians" think it the very height of religious virtue to deny systematically, the very evidence of the senses which God, in his Divine Wisdom, gave them; not surprising that they methodically give the lie to their eyes, their noses, their teeth, their palates, *quoad* religious questions. A codfish has been known to swallow a volume of theological treatises.¹ That we can excuse, for doubtlessly the mouth of the poor codfish was large and its appetite keen; but how are we to excuse the proceedings of those endless millions of "Christians" who systematically give the lie to the clear and harmonious evidences of their God-created senses? The brains of such persons might be regarded in their relation to theology, as so much tinned dead-meat. Undoubtedly the codfish that swallowed the volume of theological treatises, was much more excusable than they.

Good intentions in a wrong-doer not enough.—Now, I do not doubt the good intentions of many of those persons, but good intentions are not enough to justify anybody in wrong-doing. Indeed we are all acquainted with the saying that a very hot corner of the Universe is paved with good intentions. We have no authentic report on the subject, and I am strongly disposed to doubt the doctrine which the saying would teach; but there can be no doubt whatever that good intentions by themselves,—good intentions divorced from rational practice, are but a base achievement; and I maintain that they are likely to go for nothing or worse than nothing, unless they be made to operate upon a strictly rational ground. Even Philip II. and the Duke of Alva are said to have been animated by "good intentions"!² What signify your good

¹ v. *Athenaeum*, Sept. 1895, p. 349.

² Mr. Buckle actually writes that, at the death of Philip II., "Good reason, indeed, had the sorrowing patriot to weep as one who refused to be comforted for the fate of his earth, his realm, his land of dear souls, his dear dear land, long dear for her reputation through the world, but now leased out like a tenement or pelted farm." *History of Civilization*, vol. ii. p. 471.

intentions if you don't act in a rational manner? If a man purchases what he supposes to be a health-giving powder from you, and you, with well-intentioned stupidity, make up for him a dose of strychnine, wherein is he profited by your good intentions? Think, think, think. Get knowledge and with all your getting, don't forget to get understanding. It is "a well-spring of life unto him that hath it."

We live but as we know. Until a man is possessed of a deep desire for noble knowledge, he is living on the ground-floor of existence. Without knowledge, you may as well be a bat or an owl as a human being—nay, rather the former. Without knowledge, you are not unlikely,—you are almost certain, to become a source of mischief and disaster to your fellow-men.

Disastrous effects of ignorance.—Consider the marvelous delusion maintained through the ages by popes and others, that Religion, the articles of our belief concerning God, should be promoted by physical force. Ponder upon the ceaseless attempts that have been made to impress Christianity, so called, upon refractory persons, through blunderbusses, racks, thumb-screws and so forth! To say nothing worse of them, consider the infernal stupidity of such proceedings.

The Church in so far as it has been fabricated by priestcraft, gives forth a most powerful odour of unholiness. Most crimes one reads about, seem to be but moderately devilish compared, say, with those of the persons I have just mentioned, Philip II. and the Duke of Alva—those Gideons of the Romish Church. Obviously such a Church can only be cleansed and made sweet-scented by the aid of the clean-sweeping besom of knowledge.

Mere perorating balderdash, of course. The true Spanish patriot, if there was such a person in existence at the time, had every reason to rejoice, rather than weep, at the disappearance of that hideous miscreant from this afflicted earth.

From poverty of mental furnishing amongst hosts of our clergy, the Pulpit almost becomes a cipher or worse, and the Scripture saying comes true—"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." We may depend upon it that the Apostle Paul hunted down and murdered the first Christians mainly through lack of knowledge.

A hat that doesn't fit the head is supposed to be sufficiently ridiculous in most places where clothes are worn, but over nearly the whole world, creeds that don't fit the intellect are supposed to be quite the right thing! This long-standing theological adhesion to the lubber-fiend stupidity, — this chronic, theological hatred to divinely created Common Sense, is necessarily one of the chief supports of the black throne of Satan. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge, and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory and their multitude and their pomp and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it." Such dread consequences did Isaiah attach to the lack of knowledge.

If our forty or sixty thousand British parsons were all able husbandmen in the Divine Vineyard, all possessed of sound knowledge of religious husbandry, what wine and oil should we receive from them; how should the wilderness and the solitary places be made glad by them, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. But what can ignorant husbandmen do? What is to be made of those who, even for themselves, manifest no right desire for knowledge? The people have a great spiritual and intellectual need. Our spiritual doctors have not apprehended, therefore they do not generally minister to, that need. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man (an ignorant and obstinate one) but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Nine-tenths, probably, even of benevolent effort are

wrecked for lack of right pilotage, through ignorance being at the helm instead of knowledge. Herbert Spencer has said that in proportion as provision is made for a surplus of indigent people "the surplus will go on continually increasing"; that "each new effort to mitigate the penalties on improvidence has the inevitable effect of adding to the number of the improvident."¹ This is quite true unless you are able, in some way or other, to invigorate at the same time the mental and moral fibre of the recipient of your charity. The material slum is mainly the outcome of the mental slum.

From poverty of mental furnishing, learning itself becomes a perpetual discharge of pea-guns.

In their mental poverty, men, like the Cyclops in Euripides, think that money is the only fit object of pursuit—that all the rest is merely brag and fine words; whereas a man of knowledge sees that all the property in the Universe, Real and Personal, is but of secondary account.

From poverty of mind, in the first place, young men make their way to, and become frequenters of, the public-house, the racecourse, the gambling-den; and from thence go down into the paths of ruin and death. Consult Solomon on the young man "void of understanding."

Through mental poverty innumerable women spend their immortal souls on tittle-tattle and millinery. It is at once ridiculous and tragical that they should be so careful concerning the outside adornment of their heads, and so utterly careless touching their internal equipment.

Under the terrible blight of mental indigence, the life of the rich is frequently filled with ennui; the life of the poor, with squalor.

Society, on the whole, is a failure because of the poverty and emptiness of its head.

Civilisation is of the mind.—Most people, even in the so called civilised countries, are only adequately civilised

¹ *Principles of Ethics*, pp. 379, 391.

in the matter of clothes. Until a man has acquired the power of freely using his mind and acquiring knowledge, he can scarcely be regarded as a civilised being. In so far as your intelligence is subject to your passions, you are but a troublesome animal or worse; in so far as your passions are subject to your intelligence, you are a man and a source of helpfulness to your fellow-men. Civilisation is primarily of the mind, not of the body. Utter barbarism is sometimes clothed in purple and fine linen. To this day these simple and almost obtrusive truths are not properly realised, nor even apprehended, by the common run of people.

The mind is the Man.—A man is to be gauged according to what he is in himself, not according to what he has in his pockets. This is obvious. Knowledge is not in your library but in your head. Kingship is not in a diadem but in royal thoughts. Nothing great is hereditary, or transferable, or outside yourself. Your greatness must be in your invisible self or not at all. The mind is the man.

Whilst saying this, I recognise clearly that knowledge is but one thing. I remember that the very devils are said to possess it unavailingly. I do not agree with Plato¹ and others² that sin is wholly the result of ignorance. Although it may be that in most sins there is a large admixture of ignorance and stupidity, it remains true that millions sin in the light of knowledge. Perhaps everybody does so, to some extent. Besides, ignorance and stupidity are, themselves, largely the result of sin. Ignorance and sin support each other. But in any case, knowledge is an essential of virtuous existence. What

¹ "No unjust man is voluntarily unjust." *The Laws*, Bk. v. c. 4.

² e.g. Hobbes, *English Works*, vol. i. pp. 9-10; vol. ii. *Ep. Dedicatory*, p. iv; but elsewhere, he rightly defines sin as comprehending "every deed, word and thought against right reason." Vol. ii. p. 195. The phrase "right reason," however, is tautological,

were the Gardens of Paradise without it? At best, a place of Turkish delight. Indeed the price of knowledge, like that of wisdom, is above rubies. If the Great Turk be not your equal in knowledge and wisdom, he is your inferior in the chief sense of the word. If you have more knowledge and wisdom than the Great Turk, you have more to give to him than he has to give to you, even in his most royal mood of liberality.

In a word, then, it is not to be doubted that knowledge is a very precious possession; that without it there can be no dignity; that in any State or Commonwealth conceivable, knowledge is an essential of true emancipation and enfranchisement; of liberty, equality and noble fraternity.

The purpose of this book.—But I find that the poor world does not yet appear even to have fixed on stable building-ground for its philosophies and theologies. That building-ground I take to be the Common Sense, the Universal Reason, of mankind. It is the task of psychology to trace out the Bed-rock and the Ground-plan of this universal Reason, as it manifests itself in the human mind. To induce men to lay their foundations broad and deep upon this Bed-rock of all science, is the aim of the following pages. Until they can be induced to choose this ground, they may with great and universal advantage cease to build. The first condition of true welfare must be the possession of a sound mind soundly employed. Nothing but the devout study of Nature from the Human Soul downwards, can yield us a philosophy worth speaking about.

SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL AXIOMS

CHAPTER I

A CRITERION OR STANDARD OF TRUTH EXISTS

Philosophers of two classes—Realists and Illusionists.—Philosophers may be broadly divided into two classes, namely, Realists and Illusionists,—otherwise, Believers in Common Sense and Opponents of Common Sense. The Realists give a frank acceptance to the united reports of their faculties touching Man and Nature at large; whilst the Illusionists, of whom there are many orders and degrees, profess to give only a more or less modified acceptance of such reports.¹ The credence which they profess to give, varies, according to the school to which they may belong, from an almost complete theoretical acceptance, down to an almost complete theoretical rejection, of the reports of their faculties; though in practice, all the Illusionists, of all sorts and sizes, invariably yield exactly the same kind and the same amount of homage to their faculties, as the Realists themselves. I think it may safely be asserted that in no case whatever, does the Illusionist's practice correspond with his professed theory.

I am a Realist; and I apprehend that all the Illusionists are Realists at heart. Let us see.

¹ For a classification of the various theories of external perception, see Sir W. Hamilton in his edition of *Reid*, pp. 816-9. Sir William's "Presentationists" or "Intuitionists" are my Realists. All his Representationists I regard as Illusionists, because, *in theory*, none of them fully accept the facts of consciousness.

A criterion or standard of truth exists.—When anything is asserted, either affirmatively or negatively, the assertion necessarily proceeds upon certain axioms, or presupposes the admission of various basal or first principles of knowledge. The first axiom presupposed in any knowledge, or in any assertion of knowledge, is that a criterion or standard of truth exists. The denial of any proposition implies the presupposition of a standard of truth no less than the affirmation of any proposition. From an early period in the history of speculation until now, some philosophers have tried to deny this axiom, but their denial plainly arises from a failure to apprehend what is presupposed in the very act of denial, namely, the conscious or unconscious acknowledgment of the existence of a standard of truth. This is a law of our mental being. Neither the most extravagant sceptic nor the meanest knave can exempt himself from the operation of this law any more than he can exempt his body from the law of gravitation; so that until one is prepared to recognise the law in question, he must, to be consistent, either preserve a harmonious silence about things in general, or, talking without sanction, commit a breach of philosophic decency. Every man—especially the man who proposes to discuss things in their scientific aspect, must be the merest babbler and self-stultifier until he has implicitly or explicitly granted the existence of a criterion of truth. It has been well said that “to argue is to assert the validity of argument.”¹ How are we to tell even the money value of anything until we are agreed as to the standard of the coinage in which the value is to be told? How are we to get measured for a pair of boots without a standard of measurement? How are we to purchase potatoes satisfactorily, without weights and measures? And yet there are innumerable persons who seem to suppose that they may discuss Philosophy without reference to a standard—more,

¹ Brown: *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. i. p. 260.

even in contumacy of a standard ! I submit that such a proceeding bears absurdity on the face of it. Deny this first principle, the existence of a criterion of truth, and you find yourself either reduced to silence or—if you venture to speak, uttering vain gabble. Let it then be understood that the first thing the philosopher has to do, is to recognise the existence of a standard or criterion of truth. To this extent, at least, all men must be Realists. It is a law of our mental being from which there can be no escape.

CHAPTER II

THAT CRITERION OF TRUTH IS ONLY TO BE FOUND IN CONSCIOUSNESS

As soon as he understands the question which he is called upon to decide, every adult and sane person will admit that the existence of some criterion of truth must be admitted before any question whatever can be rationally debated. I now lay down the proposition that the required criterion of truth can only be found in our own consciousness,—consciousness being taken as inclusive of the whole series of our sentient states,¹ simple or complex, as they assert or deny anything, or confirm or correct one another or, in the words of Sir William Hamilton, as “the recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections.”²

(A) HISTORIC EVIDENCE

All mankind have acted and do act on the explicit or implicit assumption and belief that, to the extent of their faculties, they carry within themselves the criterion of truth. I lay down this proposition in its broadest form, and do not think that it can possibly admit of any exceptions. Written opinions that consciousness is and must be the criterion of truth, might be abundantly

¹ Cf. Brown : *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. i. p. 226.

² *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 201. As to the use of the word consciousness, Sir William says—“The employment of the word *conscientia*, of which consciousness is a translation, is in its psychological significance, not older than the philosophy of Descartes”; and that previously to his time the word was almost exclusively used in the ethical sense of conscience. *Ib.* p. 196.

adduced from all kinds of writers, ancient and modern. For a useful series of such opinions, I would refer the reader to Sir William Hamilton's Dissertations appended to his edition of *Reid*.¹ Indeed nobody speaks or writes a word without an inner conviction that he possesses a personal standard of truth to the full extent of his faculties; and at the same time, everybody holds an equally strong conviction that the person he addresses is likewise possessed of such a standard. Yet from early times, many philosophers have denied this truth,—men who, as Montaigne said of the Pyrrhonians, have seemed to “aspire to the high point of dubitation.” There have actually been large schools of philosophers who have asserted that seeing was not believing—who have tried to make out that the evidence for the existence of bricks is quite defective. “It may seem a very extravagant attempt of the sceptics to destroy *reason by* argument and ratiocination,” Hume admits, yet is this, says he, “the grand scope of all their inquiries and disputes. They endeavour to find objections both to our abstract reasonings and to those which regard matter of fact and existence.”²

Even Scepticism presupposes the conscious criterion.—To all such persons let us repeat that in denying the veracity of consciousness, they still implicitly, and in self-contradiction, presuppose its veracity; for their denial is merely a negative assertion, and all assertion implies a consciousness, a criterion, “a recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts.” Nothing could give us a keener appreciation of the general belief in the veracity of consciousness than the sight of a complete library of scepticism. Indeed to deny its veracity, is to deny the possibility of knowledge, which denial itself is logically self-destructive, for an

¹ Pp. 770–803.

² Hume: *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding. Essays Moral, etc.*, vol. ii. pp. 127–8 (Green and Grose's ed. 1898).

alleged illusion can only be proved by contrasting it with a postulated reality. *All judgment of illusion, whether of subjective or objective illusion, assumes and must be founded upon a postulated and known reality.* Thus an ontological scepticism is impossible and absurd,—for ever, not only incapable of proof, but self-destructive, since it is seen that the sceptical Pantaloon requires a real basis upon which to execute his antics, no less exigently than the realist Toiler requires a real basis upon which to execute his works. In other words, he who asserts that anything is false or unknown, necessarily presupposes in his assertion, that his individual consciousness is true. He who asserts that everything is false and that nothing can be known, necessarily stultifies himself in the assertion and renders unwitting or unwilling homage to his own consciousness.¹

Sceptics should imitate Cratylus.—In view of these facts, all persons who profess to deny the veracity or the authority of consciousness, should, to be consistent, imitate the conduct of the sceptic Cratylus who, according to Aristotle, was of opinion that “one ought to speak of nothing,” and “merely moved his finger and rebuked Heraclitus for saying that it was not possible to enter the same river twice, for he himself was of opinion that you could not do so once”:² from which it would appear that Cratylus was the most consistent member of the dubitational School of philosophers. Yet in rebuking Heraclitus, it is quite obvious that the facts of life were too strong for his illusionary theory, since the rebuke itself presupposed in himself a standard of reality and judgment, and admitted the existence of another philosopher besides himself,—thus cancelling his sceptical hypothesis.

¹ It is allowed by Hume himself that “if there be any suspicion of an author’s insincerity, these oblique propositions discover his real opinions better than his more formal and direct assertions.” *Essays Moral*, etc., vol. i., note, p. 441.

² *Metaphysics*, Bk. iii. c. 5 (Bohn tr.).

However, we might well wish that all the sceptical fraternity, ancient and modern, had condescended to imitate his instructive example, as in the case recorded, and had, as a rule, been contented to wag their fingers merely, instead of their tongues and pens. It seems to lie beyond dispute that the speaking and writing ones among them have enormously increased the difficulties of philosophy; and instead of helping to instruct, vitalise and ennoble humanity (the right task of the philosopher), they have only succeeded in confusing the human mind and in casting dark and deadly shadows upon life.

Just think of it. We cannot, as we have seen, sell or buy, and do not attempt to sell or buy, a pair of boots without reference to, and confidence in, a standard of truth of some kind—a standard that appeals to our own consciousness; and yet some men propose to deal with affairs of life and death without a standard and in contravention of standards! They wish to become philosophers not merely through want of sense, but by opposition to sense! Never did the jack-pudding execute such strange antics as the sceptical philosopher.

(B) PERSONAL EVIDENCE

But let us pass from external authorities on the subject—from what other persons say to what you yourself say. If you wish to learn the mechanism and the principles upon which a watch works, it is not sufficient to hear what somebody says about it, but you must, on your own account, turn up the watch and make a personal examination and study of it. So with your mind. Don't merely listen to what people say about it, but turn up the thing itself, so to speak, and observe its constitution for yourself very closely—not refusing, of course, the guidance of approved wise men in your investigation, and conclude about it for yourself. In

this way alone can you ever hope to have a competent knowledge either of watches or anything else. Your own individual mind is your ultimate and highest authority on all questions. Your prime concern is with truth as you yourself know it or may know it, not with a wilderness of talkers about truth.

“Small have continual plodders (pedants) ever won,
Save base authority from others' books.”

Peter Smith's testimony.—To illustrate the case, assume that you are Peter Smith. Take the question of your personal identity. Suppose I ask—“How do you know that you are Peter Smith?” Your highest and last answer will necessarily be, “I know that I am Peter Smith.” All the illusionist philosophers in the world cannot persuade you to the contrary.

Take the question of sensation and external perception. You are wearing a pair of boots. An illusionist philosopher asks—“How do you know that you are wearing them?” Your final answer must be, “I know that I am wearing them; I both feel and perceive that I have them on my feet.” The philosopher further asks, “How do you know that they are not an illusion—a tertian quiddity, or an hallucination, or a mental modification of some kind?” You look at the philosopher in astonishment: you properly take him to be joking or gone mad. Your consciousness assures you that they are neither a mental modification, nor a tertian quiddity, nor an illusion of any kind whatever, but that they are what they are, namely, a pair of boots; and so with all your other sensations and external perceptions. Not only, indeed, is your personal conviction on the subject, your highest warranty for the fact, but you will find, if you try, that you cannot conceive a more convincing warranty. Or take internal perception. “You say that ‘two and two are four.’” Our philosopher asks, “How do you know that two and two are four? How do

you know that they may not be five?" Your final reply must be, "I have an intuition that two and two are necessarily four; I am conscious of it; I cannot by any rational process, impair my consciousness of it." Your consciousness that the proportion is necessarily true, is your highest conceivable authority for the truth of it. It is worse than childish to seek for a higher authority. Unless you are of weak intellect, you feel perfectly assured that you will be justified in counting your chickens on the two-and-two-make-four principle, to all eternity.

Or take appetancy of any kind. You desire to drink. What is the proof of it? "Beyond cavil, I am thirsty. I don't require any philosopher to assure me of the fact. I myself am the chief authority for the fact."

You are angry. Your first and last warranty of the fact is your own feeling.

You wish to go to London. The proof of the fact is your consciousness of your own wish.

You intend to meet me at 8 o'clock. Your first and last proof of it, is your volitional consciousness.

You admire a sunset. The best and, indeed, the only proof of it, lies in your own feeling.

You have done what you ought not to have done. The profoundest proof of it lies in your own consciousness. If not there, it is nowhere: you are either ignorant or guiltless of transgression. In Law there is a sound maxim—*Ignoratio legis neminem excusat*. If sound in the legal, how much more sound in the moral world! Rarely can ignorance fully excuse moral delinquency—probably never.

You are ashamed of having done something wrong. The final proof of the fact lies in yourself: in such a case, your very serious self. Indeed no other authority than oneself can ultimately be heard in any personal matter whatever. Even Cardinal Newman when off his orthodox guard, fully acknowledges this:—"The authoritative oracle is . . . seated in the mind of the individual, who is

thus his own law, his own teacher and his own judge in those special cases of duty which are personal to him.”¹ Plutarch records that on a certain occasion, Demosthenes suspected the Delphic Oracle of “philipizing.” That might well be, but the human conscience is an Oracle that will not philipize. In all cases your own consciousness is your principal authority for any conviction—your chief datum of intelligence. “All knowledge and all science must be built upon principles that are self-evident, and of such principles, every man who has common sense is a competent judge when he conceives them distinctly. Hence it is that disputes often terminate in an appeal to common sense.”² “The Botanist, the Zoologist, the Mineralogist can accumulate only by care and trouble and expense an adequate assortment of the objects necessary for their labours and observations. But that most important and interesting of all studies of which man himself is the object, has no need of anything external. It is only necessary that the observer enters into his inner self in order to find there all he stands in need of; or rather it is only by doing this that he can hope to find anything at all. If he only effectively pursue the method of observation and analysis, he may even dispense with the study of philosophical systems. This is at best only useful as a means towards a deeper and more varied study of himself; and is often only a tribute paid by philosophy to erudition.”³ All intelligence begins in

¹ *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 347–8. See also p. 104 and elsewhere. “It was the experience of Socrates that the Scribes and Pharisees of Athens were further from the kingdom of knowledge than the humble.” Forbes: *Life of Socrates*, p. 137.

² Reid: *Works*, p. 422. Of course, Hamilton himself, again and again admits that the veracity of consciousness cannot be rationally entertained. See, e.g., his edition of Reid, *Mem. for Preface*, p. xvii. “Knowledge is consciousness viewed in relation to its object; consciousness is knowledge viewed in relation to its subject.” *Ib.* p. 933. “Consciousness properly is conversant equally with the objective and with the subjective.” Note, p. 961.

³ Sir W. Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 383.

and returns to consciousness. Wriggle and writhe just as you please, and still I defy you to escape from this great law. All your wriggling and writhing indeed, will but entangle you more inextricably, if possible, in its meshes. The merest sprat of a philosopher cannot escape from it. "Here's a fish hangs in the net like a poor man's right in the law." The fish may be extricated from the net, and the poor man's right from the law, but, by dialectical means, the merest sprat of a philosopher cannot extricate himself and cannot be extricated from the grip of consciousness. Paltry though his actual consciousness of himself and the Universe may be, he can only render himself more contemptible, if he attempt to escape from that consciousness.

The Illusionist in a thunderstorm.—That the criterion of truth be sought in consciousness is, then, the very beginning of philosophy. If philosophers would but recognise and loyally and firmly abide by this criterion, it would enable them to drain off, at once, whole oceans—stagnant, dead, malodorous oceans, of malarious "philosophy" and "science"—falsely so called. For example, no illusionist—not even Bishop Berkeley himself, ever really believed that a thunderstorm, say, was a mere disturbance within the region of his own episcopal ego! He knew perfectly well, I surmise, that the *esse* of a thunderstorm was not a mere *percipi*,—that it was something quite outside himself. Every man off his guard,—aye, and even on his guard, is a Realist; *i.e.* he believes the reports of his faculties as intelligently interpreted. The first duty incumbent upon the philosopher as upon all other persons, is to be sensible—this simply. It must be sound policy to be sensible; there can be no successful departure from it. Never aspire, like the Pyrrhonians, to the high point of dubitation, but rather aspire continually to the sure point of certainty. Don't scoff at the mention of certainty; never forget that there are Multiplication Tables in the world and wooden tables, and thorns and briars and tooth-

aches and gallows withal—all of them very certain things. To call in question the intuitions by which we know their existence, is but to engage in a confusing and chaos-creating war against the obvious.

Illusionists akin to lunatics.—It should be observed that the great peculiarity, the distinguishing note in the conduct of lunatics is their strange inability to recognise and accept some common fact or facts, principle or principles, of everyday life. Now in this respect, all the Illusionists, in so far as they are Illusionists, are exactly like them. They pertinaciously and perversely refuse to recognise and accept, *quoad* their systems, the clamant facts and principles of common sense as they are manifested in everyday life—a proceeding so ridiculous and preposterous as to be in itself sufficient to subvert their claim to the character of philosophers. For, just consider it,—what sillier thing can any lunatic do than refuse to accept the facts and principles revealed to him in common sense? When, to take a case, a lunatic persists in regarding himself as a poached egg, is he any worse than an Illusionist who insists on regarding his boots, say, as nothing more than a modification of himself, or a tertian quiddity or mere representation of some reality beyond them, or an illusion or hallucination of some kind or other? Certainly not. I submit, therefore, that the Illusionist—*qua* Illusionist, cannot reasonably disown mental kinship with the lunatic. Indeed it appears to be incontestible that the lunatic may even be entitled to a favourable comparison with the wilful Illusionist; for whereas the delusion of the former is presumably involuntary and proceeding from disease, there is too much reason to suspect that the delusion of the latter is assumed and dishonest. If not, it must necessarily be due to the very foggiest of thinking.

Absolute honesty required in reading the Consciousness.—Of course it should be continually borne in mind by all kinds of persons, and very especially by all professed

thinkers and speakers, that truth is required in the inward parts. The chief evils of the world arise (1) from men failing to think to the best of their ability, and (2) from not speaking and acting according to honest thought. If we would all consent to speak from heart-conviction alone, and firmly refuse to speak without heart-conviction, I don't think that there would be any great difference of opinion discovered amongst us regarding the primary intuitions of intelligence.

Consciousness is the common ground upon which all sects necessarily meet.—Without controversy, then, I think we may accept the deliverances of consciousness as genuinely scientific so far as they go, and as admitting of no authority higher than themselves. The Moral Law, for example, the Multiplication Table, the Extension of Space, the Existence of Bodies, they require and admit of no authority higher than the deliverances of Consciousness to establish their actuality. Our consciousness of such truths must be to us not only the criterion but the very ground of their truth; the ground upon which all persons must necessarily meet each other, even when they ignorantly and perversely deny the validity of the proceeding. Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte and Hegel meeting each other, would necessarily assume the veracity of the deliverances of Consciousness or Common Sense, exactly as five cheese-mongers meeting to discuss cheese, would necessarily assume the veracity of such deliverances; and it is quite obvious that they could not rationally exchange thoughts with each other but upon the same presuppositions and assumptions. In the great name of God, how otherwise could they rationally meet but upon the basis of Common Sense! No other expedient is thinkable. In a word, all men are Realists at heart, whatever some of them may say to the contrary. All Illusionist theories may be regarded as mere exercises in blindness or perversity. Neither intellectual nor spiritual sustenance is to be found in the

Illusionist volumes in so far as they are Illusionist. They are as arid as the Sahara. The Illusionists themselves are as frogs croaking in Chaos.

(C) THE THEOLOGICAL CRITERION OF TRUTH IS ALSO FOUND
IN CONSCIOUSNESS

With all reverence I apply the same doctrine to theology. The sanctions, the criteria, of a sound theology are only to be found in the human consciousness.

Petrus Smith contra Mundum.—The human consciousness is the chief witness for all highest as well as for all lowest things—for Divinity as well as for Bricks. Honestly read, I take it to be the real Book of God. In the human soul, if anywhere, is to be found the chief revelation of God to man. Indeed the written Bible says as much when it declares that the Law is written upon our hearts. I maintain, then, that our excellent friend Peter Smith must also be to himself, and insist on being to himself, the highest and ultimate authority on theology. On this score he is entitled to declare—*Petrus Smith contra mundum*.

Let it be observed that I do not assert that Peter must be a profound theologian to get to Heaven! To do so were absurd. In order to arrive in that fairest country, Peter, I apprehend, must simply be an honest, God-fearing man to the very best of his ability. Oliver Cromwell was of opinion that "No one rose so high as he who knew not whither he was going."¹ That may be true; but I think there can be no doubt at all, that nothing in this world gives promise of soaring so high as determined honesty. We may depend upon it that Peter Smith will receive a great reception from Simon Peter, if he soars up to him on the shining wings of honesty.

My object in the world as a rational soul.—What must be my object in this world as a rational soul? Surely to

¹ S. R. Gardiner : *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 71.

build up a noble personality, and to help others to do the same. Upon what foundation are you and I going to build this edifice of our lives? Surely upon the grounds that we do actually know—not upon those about which we are either ignorant or uncertain. For the life of me I cannot see how we are to combat the Devil effectively but upon the broad basis, the firm footing, of the Understanding.

Cardinal Newman's theory that theology cannot be taught.—But in respect of this question, how does the world stand? There are thousands of theologians who implicitly tell us that theology cannot be taught. There are many who say it explicitly. The late Cardinal Newman, for example, declared—and that in his *University Sermons*,¹ that “there is a divinity in the theology of the Church which those who feel cannot communicate”; and I presume that all our Romanist friends would agree with him in that disastrous contention. Consider it. Aristotle rightly says, I think, that a “proof of a person's knowledge is his ability to teach.”² More: one, says he, “who is more accurate and more competent to give instruction in the causes of things, we regard more wise about every science.”³ Herein I think he speaks truly, and expresses upon the subject the common sense of mankind. Yet our theologising cardinal tells us in the very teeth of Common Sense, that theology is a thing to be felt, not communicated! Worse: this very same cardinal having distinctly informed us that theology is not communicable, perpetrates the exquisite absurdity of writing a great many volumes about it—a great many volumes more or less concerned about that which he declares to be incommunicable. I think we are entitled to protest against such proceedings. Whenever a priest or any other person pretends to possess an unteachable knowledge of any subject and, at the same time, makes assertions concerning it which our intellect repels, I think we are entitled to

¹ P. 346.² *Metaphysics*, Bk. i. c. i. (Bohn tr.).³ *Ib.* c. ii.

take it as an infallible proof that such person is, so far, ignorant, presumptuous or hallucinated.

Intelligent ignorance and stupid ignorance.—You cannot be said to know a thing,—at all events, you have no effective knowledge of it, unless you can give some intelligent account of it. Cardinal Newman fully admitted this also, when off his guard. For instance, in criticising and approving a religious passage which he cites from Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, he properly says—"It is plain that if the passage is worth anything, we must secure that worth for our own use by the personal action of our own minds, or else we shall be only professing and asserting its doctrine without having any ground or right to assert it."¹ The same doctrine applies to ignorance. If we are to speak of it at all, we ought to speak of it intelligently. There is intelligent ignorance and there is stupid ignorance. It is intelligent ignorance to say—"God is too high for me; I cannot understand Him." It looks like presumptuous ignorance for a priest to say—"There is a divinity in the theology of the Church which those who feel cannot communicate." To urge such a claim in connection with any secular science would immediately be regarded by all intelligent persons as sheer folly. A mere feeling, indeed, may well be incommunicable; but theology is theology only in so far as it is made up of doctrine; and doctrines are doctrines only in so far as they are communicable: therefore theologians should be able to communicate their doctrines to persons of ordinary intelligence without much trouble.

Fatuity of all occultism and obscurantism.—None, not even a cardinal or a pope, has any right to address us upon a subject which he does not understand, or upon a supposed incommunicable knowledge of any kind, unless it

¹ *Grammar of Assent*, p. 298. This is indubitable; but why didn't he stick to it? A circus-man may get prosperously round a ring on two horses going in the same direction, but it surpasses the power of man, even though he be a cardinal, to sit on two horses trotting in opposite directions.

be to say humbly that he does not understand it and that he has nothing to say about it. Yet they talk and write volubly about things which they don't understand, or which they declare to be incommunicable: hence the utter futility and fatuity of so much of their theology, and of all occultism and obscurantism whatever. The gnostics or docetics of old days, for example, invented the hypothesis that Christ was not born of woman, but had "descended on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; that He had imposed on the senses of His enemies and of His disciples; and that the ministers of Pilate had wasted their impotent rage on an airy phantom, who *seemed* to expire on the cross, and after three days to rise from the dead."¹ Such nonsense has passed and passes for theology. All too frequently, the theologian appears to pride himself on his ability to take leave of his senses or intelligence, whereas the only hope of theology, or any other good thing, lies in a strict adherence to the dictates of intelligence. Every man opposed to intelligence, belongs to the gibbering Brotherhood of Futilitarians.

Fatuity and Danger of laying claim to an official possession of the Spirit of God.—I care not for any claim which they may lodge that they are officially "possessed of the Spirit of God." All sensible persons will be very chary about admitting such a claim. Indeed it will not be admitted by any sane person, unless the claim be accompanied by full proof of its warrantability. If you wish to convince one of the truth of anything that intrinsically seems to be very improbable, you must bring such evidence with you as will overpower the intrinsic improbability. That man who boasts himself that he, in particular, has official possession of the Spirit of God, must be reckoned amongst the theosophists and futilitarians—*i.e.* amongst impostors or simpletons, unless he be able to manifest superior intelligence and accomplish visibly

¹ Gibbon: *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 320.

superior work,—unless, in short, he be able to furnish clear proof of his celestial endowments. To any other than its possessor, all occultism, all knowledge stated to be incommunicable, must be a vain thing. I lay down the proposition without hesitation. The professional occultist can only justify himself by a vigorous holding of his tongue. It is only the man relying upon individual intelligence and appealing to individual intelligence, who has any right whatever to utter a syllable either through his pen or through his tongue. It is only he who is entitled to use Elihu's controversial challenge—"If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me; stand up." Until a man can do this—whatever the subject of discussion may be, he is to be most strenuously recommended to retain his seat in golden silence.

Theologians should take a lesson from Moses.—Notice how very carefully Moses is reported to have insisted (in Ex. iv.) on being furnished with miraculous credentials to his divine Commission; which admirably shows what an excellent endowment of Common Sense that great man possessed. Now, all our theologians should imitate Moses in this respect; and before coming forward to declare a supernatural message of any kind, they should, obviously, like Moses, take great care to be furnished with miraculous credentials of its truth. Indeed not only common prudence, but common decency requires that they should follow the great example of Moses and restrain themselves from declaring supernatural doctrine altogether, unless they can back it adequately,—say, by some supernatural demonstration with their walking-sticks: for the more supernatural the doctrine, the more exigent in all cases, I repeat, must be the demand for an overpowering testimony of its truth. For the very love of God, let us either have sound sense or silence. No third alternative is very tolerable to plain, sensible men. A third alternative—sound without sense, drives a great many of them out of the churches.

True Religion is an appeal to the Intelligence.—True Religion itself is nothing, I hold, if not an appeal to the intelligence. In the hands of most theologians, unhappily, intelligence has to be more or less subverted before you can become religious! Thus even Bacon: "We are to believe his word though we find a reluctance in our reason. For if we believe only that which is agreeable to our sense, we give consent to the matter and not to the author," etc.¹ In such fashion have ignorance, prejudice, and superstition warred upon Reason—treated Reason, actually, as if it were the natural enemy of God! whilst, as a matter of fact, it is the Prime Minister of God, and continually calling upon us to serve Him with all our might. To propose the subversion of Reason, of Intelligence, in any interest whatever, seems to be a most damnable error. Before the various religious organisations are likely to accomplish permanent and far-reaching religious work, I think they will have to get rid of the whole hideous incubus of occult and irrational theology. In any case, we are all absolutely convinced that occult and irrational engineering would do no good—can do no good; and as the occult and irrational can do no good for this world, I think we may safely conclude, by parity of reasoning, that they can do no good for the world-to-come. Let us surrender the whole Realm of the Occult and irrational to its natural prince—Dousterswivel.

The Cardinal's claim reduced to absurdity.—This matter is so extremely important that we must devote a few pages to it. How would a cardinal or a priest of any kind, like to be shaved by a barber who repudiated common sense, but yet insisted on shaving him! How would he like to be driven in a train by an engine-driver who repudiated common sense, and only professed an occult and incommunicable knowledge of engine-driving and signals! And yet our cardinals and other people propose to guide us

¹ *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. ii. ; *Works*, vol. i. p. 221.

Heavenwards by the occult and incommunicable! Quacks and simpletons, I am afraid, are found in ugly abundance at other places than fairs. We live in a world of strange beings. No wonder that intelligence is sometimes driven out of churches, or that it sits depressed therein so frequently.

Take the following article of belief which is enjoined upon its adherents by the Church of Rome. "I also profess and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined and declared by the sacred canons and church councils, and particularly by the Council of Trent; and likewise, I also condemn, reject and anathematise all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever, condemned, rejected and anathematised by the Church."¹ Suppose that the Medical Profession were to demand a similar declaration of "faith" in the medical dogmas of some ancient Medical Council! Such a demand, I submit, enjoins hideous treason against both God and man. It requires men to surrender their intelligence and cease to be men. It is entirely worthy of our gibbering friends, the Futilitarians.

Let there be a clear understanding upon this subject. God has nowhere commanded Smith—either in Reason or in "Revelation," to surrender his understanding to Brown. In no authentic case has God threatened to curse Smith because he cannot accept, nor even understand, what Brown tells him. All words touching the welfare of men as responsible individuals, must be addressed to them as such. One earnest conviction held by Smith himself, is, in the very nature of things, worth ten thousand hearsay opinions or statements furnished to him, or forced upon him, by Brown; even though Brown be a priest, or a cardinal, or a pope, or an ecumenical council of popes, cardinals and priests, of any pretensions whatsoever.

¹ Creed of Pius IV., art. 14; Collette's *Rome's Theory of Tradition*, p. 21.

Neither in life nor in death can any supra-rational or anti-rational doctrine, either sacred or secular, profit a man.

If the Cardinal be right, the Founder of Christianity must have been wrong.—Look at the case in another way. It is of such measureless importance that it should be religiously studied from every point of view. If the cardinal be right in saying that Theology is incommunicable, the great Founder of Christianity Himself, must have been completely wrong about it,—must have completely misunderstood His own Gospel, for according to Him, Christianity was to be taught and preached to all nations.¹ Query: How is this Gospel to be taught to all nations if it really contain a highly technical, or an essentially mysterious, message? How do the cardinal and other people propose to instruct the nations in the occult and incommunicable?

The sine qua non of a Catholic Gospel or Philosophy.—The *sine qua non* of a Universal or Catholic Gospel or Philosophy is, I contend, that it shall be simple, convincing and brief. The Gospel of God, I apprehend, must be a Gospel easily comprehensible by any earnest inquirer touching the things which most closely concern him. The only criterion of Catholicity in any doctrine will be—naturally, that it is capable of being conscientiously declared *semper ubique ab omnibus* when they have fully digested it.

Jesus “saw much people and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to *teach* them many things.”² We may suppose, I think, that the human mind is competent to know all that it is intended to know, and that it should be guided mainly by what it knows, and never in contradiction of what it knows. An awakened mind cannot rest upon anything but the truth. Teaching is the first thing wanted; and if one be unteachable, *i.e.* ineducable, his case is hopeless. “Hearken unto Me every one of you and understand.”³ How

¹ Mark xiii. 10.

² *Ib.* vi. 34.

³ *Ib.* vii. 14.

exceedingly different the notions of Christ and the Cardinal! Nothing without understanding. Yet some of our theological leaders think it little short of blasphemy to be asked to render good and sufficient reasons touching their craft. Demand good and sufficient reasons from them for the dogmas which they advance, and they will positively pretend to regard you as a dangerous person! whereas—if they were wise, they should rejoice in every intelligent question as an opportunity for spreading instruction.

Each human soul possesses divine rights.—The ordinary theological genius seems to suppose that Religion can be of no account unless it be involved in clouds of mystification and stupefaction. I would have him understand that the finest kind of Religion is that whose doctrines are as clear as the noonday sun, and quite free from mystification and stupefaction. "The right to look at the self and the world apart from the presuppositions of the ruling system," says the Rev. Professor Iverach, "must soon be inevitably claimed also in the Sphere of Religion. The great deliverance was the work of Religion."¹ Quite right. All spiritual deliverances are effected through Reason. Every sane soul is an incunabulum of divine truths; every human soul has divine rights corresponding therewith; every human soul has within itself the potentiality of mighty worth; all the potentialities of wisdom are implicitly contained in every human mind to the extent of its intelligence. No one has a right to command, threaten, browbeat, anathematise or curse another with respect to his mental or spiritual convictions or concerns. Hence the deadly sin of the so-called "Church."

Unfortunately, the elders, the chief priests and scribes, as such, have scarcely ever yet been known to be men of wisdom. "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and

¹ *Descartes, Spinoza and the New Philosophy*, p. 19.

of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed";¹ from which passage, setting forth, as it does, the quintessential ecclesiastical spirit of all past ages, we should apprehend the moral necessity incumbent upon every man of being his own oracle. The old orthodoxies have been founded upon an utter perversion of our moral nature. A general recognition of this fact and a general determination to eliminate falsehood and folly from the creeds of the Churches, could scarcely fail to bring life to the dead and to create perturbation in the Kingdom of Darkness. The moral problem is of the most divine significance. We should work at this with all our might. "Reform thy inner man; it is more than scheming out reforms for a nation."²

Absurdities perpetrated by theologians.—Christ's notion indubitably was that religion should be like a candle in a candlestick giving light to all the house, and that it was altogether a rational and simple duty. The cardinal, on the contrary, appears to think that it is scarcely to be rationally regarded at all, nor rationally apprehended; but rather that it is a candle intended to burn under an inverted tub or bushel measure. At all events, he wrote *University Sermons* on what he called "The Usurpations of Reason," in which he talked quite disparagingly of "human reason"—talked of it as if it were some wretched quack thing of human invention and manufacture, in the true Futilitarian manner, and not hammered on God's Anvil at all.³ This seems always to have been the way of priests, but "'Tis an absurd thing," as Hobbes, following Aristotle, says, "for a man to make crooked the ruler he means to use."⁴

¹ Mark viii. 31.

² Froude's *Biography of Carlyle*, vol. ii. p. 206.

³ It is right to notice, however, that Newman seems to have had a very hazy knowledge of psychology. The aberrations and confusions visible amongst his writings are, probably, largely traceable to this source—as no doubt with many others.

⁴ *A Brief on the Art of Rhetorick*, Bk. i. ch. i. So Kant:—"It is only

This is a very important point. Like the cardinal and all the Illusionist philosophers, the priests persistently ignore the ugly and irreligious fact that the moment they open their uninspired jaws in derogation of human reason, they, at the same moment, necessarily rout and utterly stultify themselves—silence, as we have seen, being the only dignified refuge for a man who disbelieves the testimonies of his own faculties. But their absurdity does not terminate even here. Disparaging the rational faculties of the human soul, they themselves not only continue to use them for the ordinary or baser purposes of life, but have the further audacity to offer themselves as interpreters and mouthpieces of religion to those whom they invidiously regard as the laity. According to such worthies, God has, on the whole, spoken so obscurely, that His words are unintelligible to the lay ear, and must be interpreted to the lay intelligence by them—by ecclesiastical officials. Christ Himself has not clearly enough said what religion is, but has left it to *them* to say what it is! The lay intelligence, on their principles, is intended to receive its religion at second hand. Practically, as they would have it, Christ came to the world and darkly deposited His secret (something mysterious and incommunicable) with them—in some sacerdotal or ecclesiastical receptacle, to which they alone have access. Even Christ in the New Testament, fails to tell you what He really wants you to do. You are to go to a priest, in any case, for supplementary directions. Without such aid, the Gates of

by criticism that metaphysicians (and, as such, theologians too) can be saved from . . . controversies and from the consequent perversion of these doctrines. Criticism alone can strike a blow at the root of Materialism, Fatalism, Atheism, Fanaticism and Superstition which are universally injurious, as well as of Idealism and Scepticism, which are dangerous to the schools." *Critique of Pure Reason*, Pref. to 2nd ed. p. xxxvii. And Goethe rightly says—"Everything external that is ineffective with respect to ourselves, or is subject to doubt, is to be consigned over to criticism." *Autobiography*, Bk. xii.

Heaven are firmly barred against you. Such is the essential spirit of priestcraft in every age—a very bad craft indeed.

“The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.” I think we may take it that before God there is no distinction of clergy and laity; that God does not wish any person to remain ignorant below his faculties; that He wishes all to learn. Every sane man, layman as well as clergyman, carries within his soul, I hope, the essential apparatus not only of philosophic, but of theologic and religious lore. Equally with every good parson, every good layman should be, to the extent of his powers, a minister of the Gospel. As Tertullian aptly queries—*Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus?*¹ I think we are.

Christianity as rational.—With all the respectfulness possible in the circumstances, we must earnestly remonstrate with our clerical brethren against their peculiar views of things religious. The Sermon on the Mount, broadly interpreted, is it either irrational or supra-rational? Surely not. It appears to me to be so highly rational that if everybody would act in the spirit which it advises, it would be better for the world at large than the discovery of mines ribbed with golden bars in every parish of the country; better than to have our public roads macadamised with diamonds. The precept “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,”—is that either irrational or supra-rational? Is it common sense or stupidity? Surely, common sense. Well, this and like doctrines are the sum and exquisite essence of religion as taught by Christ. In which case, why speak about “the Usurpations of Reason”? Christ, on the whole, appears to have been a pure rationalist, a preacher of common sense.

The Human mind is of sacred constitution.—The

¹ Gibbon : *The Decline and Fall*, vol. ii., note, p. 334.

theologians have disastrously failed to observe that the human mind is of sacred constitution, and that, to the glory of God, nothing can finally give it contentment but the sacred. They have failed to see that common sense—the legitimate utterance of the mind, is a divine thing. It is, under God, by the divine glimmer of common sense that Humanity have achieved everything that is valuable for the present, and hopeful for the future. If they talked of the usurpations of Passion, or of unreason, or stupidity, or irrationality, then we should be in glad agreement with them: but—“Usurpations of Reason!” They might as well speak of usurpations of Justice, or Judgment, or Virtue. They may rest assured that Reason is a holy thing. It is simply the Law of Right; and theologians, above all others, should regard it as divine in its nature, since the Scripture actually tells them that “every man’s judgment cometh from the Lord.” As far as we can understand it, Reason seems to lie at the very root of things; the Universe seems to hang together in Reason. Apart from rational computation, there seems to be no warranty whatever that the Universe would not go to pieces. An irrational Creator, or a Creator who required his responsible creatures to be irrational, is unthinkable. Those who look askance upon Reason should reflect upon this. Even in the Dark Ages they sometimes set up and mocked at “Abbots of Unreason”; yet, to-day, Cardinals of Unreason are seriously listened to by many people; cardinals and others who block the way of the prophets and resolutely refuse to move on in the paths of understanding.

The lower faculties are also reported to be of Divine make.—As to our lower faculties, the canonical writer also declares—“The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them”—so highly did He regard eyes and ears. The Apostle John said—“He who hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the

churches." (Of course, the Apostle had more in view, than the cartilaginous organs at the sides of the human head.) Christ Himself continually spoke most respectfully both of eyes and ears, and gave us plainly to understand that *honestly used* (That's the point—the whole case hangs on Honesty. Be of good cheer, Smith) they are the very avenues of Salvation. Yet here are we, to-day, face to face with millions of more or less decent people who have been taught to be terribly afraid of, or at least very disrespectful to, their eyes and ears; taught to regard them as great frauds, mainly employed in the service of the Devil, as when these organs—these admirable organs, honestly assert and stoutly maintain against all priestly asseverations to the contrary, that Communion bread and wine cannot be discerned to be anything else than bread and wine. True to their foolish instructors, they refuse the testimony of these sacred organs which God gave them, with the obvious intention, I should suppose, that they would just be good enough to use them honestly; and, instead of doing so, obstinately assert what is absolutely contrary to their testimony. It is surely a most perverse proceeding—disgraceful to the human head, unless it be filled with osseous deposit and cannot help itself. Is it conceivable at all that Religion can be promoted by giving the lie to the testimonies of your God-created senses, spiritual or corporeal? "The diviners have seen a lie and they have told false dreams; they comfort in vain; therefore they (the people) went their way as a flock; they were troubled because there was no shepherd."

People not honest with themselves in their Religion.—Perhaps people are more false to themselves in the matter of their religion than in connection with any other serious subject. How many Pulpit-men have we at the present time, who, theologically, do not more or less shuffle with the truth? Each theologian should ply himself with this ques-

tion as if he were consciously energising under the Eye of God, and then boldly pronounce his inmost soul's answer to it. We may all rest utterly and absolutely assured that God wishes us to speak the truth on all subjects—*i.e.* according to the report of our intellect and senses, "as it is in our hearts."

God can only be known to us through our faculties.—Are we to know our relationship and our duties to God and men through our faculties or not? Think of it seriously. If we are to know that relationship and those duties at all, How but by our faculties? Yet we are seriously asked to give the lie to these—the faculties which God created! And we are to get hoisted to Heaven by the aid, mainly, of ecclesiastical "block and tackle"—Creeds, confessions, absolutions, wafers, holy water, etc.!

Anti-Scriptural Conduct of theologians.—If our Church friends would but consult the Apostle John on this point, they would find it asserted that the great condemnation was that whilst Light had come into the world, men had loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." That seems to be how it stands. We all know enough, or may know enough, if we will, to live nobly, heroically. Robert Browning rightly queries—

"May not truth be lodged alike in all
The lowest as the highest?"¹

I think it may. Noble living is built upon what we know—not upon what we don't know. Notice that nobody seems to act up to his knowledge. At all events, if any one

¹ *Paracelsus*. He obscures his query, however, with useless talk about "films."

did so, his life would be morally perfect, and I am afraid that we are not acquainted with any such lives. All intelligent men should intelligently ponder upon this great truth and renounce Occultism and obscurantism in all their branches, leaving them wholly to Table-Rappers and philosophers of that school.

Celestial and terrestrial lamplighters.—Even a good terrestrial lamplighter is an admirable citizen; but think of the glorious services which could be rendered to humanity by good celestial lamplighters! Teaching is a very great thing, and should always be in the clearest possible terms admissible by the subject. Always inquire of a professed teacher—What do you propose to elucidate? It is only by elucidating something that the “teacher” justifies his existence,—exactly as the lamplighter justifies his existence by lighting lamps. Fichte has well said that “An effort to speak for the mere sake of speaking,—to speak finely for the sake of fine speaking, and that others may know of it,—the disease of word-making,—sounding words, in which nevertheless no idea is audible,—is consistent with no man’s dignity; and,” be it noted, “least of all with that of the Academic Teacher, who represents the dignity of knowledge to future generations.”¹

To cast a slur on Reason is to cast a slur on God.—To fear Reason is to show intellectual cowardice. Judgment lies at the root of all virtue. Charity itself should bear the stamp of sound judgment. To choke Reason is to be a moral garotter. All theologising in so far as it is irrational, is a kind of moral garotting. That which is reported to us by our spiritual and corporeal faculties together with the deductions logically drawn therefrom, is all that we can possibly have for truth, mental, or physical, or metaphysical; so that to reject Reason is intellectually suicidal. Further, to cast a slur upon Reason is to cast a slur upon

¹ *Popular Works*, vol. i. p. 307. Alas that Fichte’s practice should have accorded so badly with his theory!

God who made the rational faculties. The late Cardinal Manning erred on this point as much as his rival Newman. He held that the standard "even of good people was the human spirit at best and that its standard was immensely below the standard of the divine."¹ This common root-error goes far to explain the confusion and fatuity of so much theology. It seems as if theologians were determined to oppose Man to God, although God is supposed, by themselves as well as others, to have "made man in His own image"; and although we find that nothing will satisfy the awakened soul but the approach to the divine standard—that of perfection.

A prime error of the orthodox.—I take this to be a prime error of the orthodox, that they actually seem to be determined to make out that it would be nothing less than dishonouring to God even to suppose that a man may be a blessing to himself. Nay, we should have to suppose from the grotesque views of many of them touching our relationship to the Deity, that He had taken special care to prevent the very possibility of man being a blessing to himself. Down through the ages they harp upon that wicked old question propounded by Eliphaz the Temanite—"Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect?"—to which Job should most emphatically have replied, "There can be no reasonable doubt about that."²

Rightness of the demand for explanations.—Again, to ask for explanations seems to be deemed by many persons as nothing short of an act of impiety. They are apparently sworn against explanations in matters religious. Why should it be so? The healthy human mind asks for explanations as naturally as the healthy human eye

¹ Purcell: *Life of Manning*, vol. i. p. 778.

² See, e.g., Prov. xi. 20—"Such as are upright in their ways are His delight."

asks for light. "Explain" is in all cases, except in things inscrutable, one of the most necessary, honest and religious demands which one man can make of another in any matter concerning himself. By common consent that man is a fool who does not seek for information concerning his own interests. Christ Himself delighted, apparently, in explaining things as far as He could, to real inquirers. In everything concerning us He generally addressed Himself to our faculties in the most simple manner—by precept, example, figure, parable, aphorism. Again and again His address was "to him that hath ears," that was, to him possessed of common sense. He even pronounced the most terrible curses upon those who shut people off from knowledge—"Woe unto you lawyers! for ye have taken away the *key of knowledge*. Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."¹ Now, this is one of the great offences of occultists and obscurantists of all kinds—they will not use the faculties which God gave them,—gave them, doubtlessly, in the most absolute good faith. Nay, they have actually the profanity to speak contumeliously of, and to abuse, these God-given faculties. The worst kind of them keep the eyes of their minds as firmly closed against the rays of common sense as a frightened oyster keeps its shell closed against enemies. Others, less profane, it may be, or less stupid, only consent to open about half an eye—receiving its reports dubiously. The only chance for both parties is to open wide these eyes of their minds and to rest assured that God is no juggler. To man, either living or dying, there is nothing of any importance that does not belong to the common sense. Even in Heaven, I apprehend, there will be high delight in receiving explanations. Even there, I anticipate that occult or transcendental dogma or doctrine will be useless for any high purpose. There is no strength anywhere but on an intellectual, conscious basis. Reason is not merely

¹ Luke xi. 52.

consonant with, but it is necessary to, all human perfection.¹
As Dante finely expresses it—All

“ Are blessed even as their sight descends
Deeper into the truth, wherein rest is
For every mind. Thus happiness hath root
In seeing not in loving, which of sight
Is aftergrowth.”²

In a word, Heaven itself can only be known to us, when the time comes, through our faculties, which in their sum make up our consciousness. Bliss itself only exists as it is known and felt in consciousness. If God Himself were condescending to speak with us face to face (I say it with all reverence), our own consciousness would be the only conceivable proof of it. In the nature of things, no other proof is possible. The light, even of heaven, can only reach us through our own minds. Think of this. There seems to be no resting-place for any human soul, either on earth or in heaven, but on conscious convictions.

We are to use our faculties to the best of our ability.—Indeed, not only are we to use our faculties, but we criminally fail in our duty if we do not use them to the very best of our ability. On the highest advice, we are not to tie up even a poor talent of money in a napkin; nay, we are threatened with punishment if we do—as seemeth right. What, then, about tying up the mental talents—the immortal faculties of our immortal souls, as in a bag, under requisition of ecclesiastical persons? In doing so, I apprehend that we commit a great treason against our Maker, who plainly appears to have given us our minds for no other purpose than that we should know things by them, rejoice in the Universe with them, and aspire to Heaven through them.

It is further to be noted that if having earnestly tried to understand a doctrine, we yet fail to understand

¹ Cf. Aristotle: *Ethics*, iii. 12. 7.

² *Paradise*, Canto xxviii. (Cary's tr.).

it, we are forthwith absolved from acting under it. Not only so. It would be criminal for us to act under it in such circumstances, *i.e.* to act under the doctrine in conscious ignorance of its meaning. Test this proposition in medicine, surgery, engineering, art of war, any art. And if it is criminal to act without knowledge in earthly matters, by what strange alchemy can it become virtuous to act without knowledge in our spiritual affairs? Intelligence and Justice require that a free being shall be governed according to principles which he understands, and to whose rightness he cannot honestly refuse his assent.

Nothing should be asserted to be true that is not known to be true.—Again it is quite plain, I submit, that a theologian, like other good people, should assert nothing but what he knows or understands to be true from facts and principles, or by deductions logically drawn therefrom, unless to say that he does not know it to be true. Should he affirm something that he does not really know to be true, it is quite obvious that he is guilty of a rash and immoral act. In doctrine, as well as life, a man should only give voice to his personal convictions and carefully reasoned opinions: otherwise, obviously, he becomes intellectually, either a swindler or a self-deceiver. It should be faithfully borne in mind by all men that knowledge and understanding are the only justification of speech; that apart from knowledge and understanding, speech is actually something lower than goose-gabble. But what do we find some whole Churches doing? Actually, we find them going the length of pronouncing eternal damnation upon, it may be, truly religious persons, for refusing to accept doctrines to which their faculties are opposed, or which they do not even understand! Strangest of all strange proceedings is this, that eternal damnation should ever have been pronounced upon a single living soul for having religiously said: "I don't believe a certain dogma," or "I don't understand a certain dogma, and cannot profess

to believe it." Yet however ridiculous it may be, this is one of the tasks to which ecclesiasticism has committed itself in all ages—damning people for not believing certain things on the *ipse dixit* of the assertor. If the Heavens were not serious and compassionate, I fancy they would be continually ringing with laughter over the folly of men.

We may safely depend upon it, I think, that God is not going to pronounce judgment against us for failing to believe what we do not know or what we have no means of knowing; or for keeping our minds in suspension as to what we know imperfectly. We may depend upon it, I think, that God is only going to enter into judgment with us concerning the things which we very clearly know, or have the means of clearly knowing, but regard not. This, indeed, seems to be the very essence of the Gospel of human responsibility, and the all-essential condition of a true kingdom of God over men.

Thought, a beneficent power.—Thus it appears that Thought is not a profane exercise at all, as so many persons seem to fear, but a living, loving, beneficent power. There is nothing so well fitted to undermine the kingdom of Darkness as well-directed thought. Without it, this great task cannot be achieved. If all our clergy were real thinkers, it might make Hell tremble to its inmost recesses. Had the Nation one large ear, no wiser word could be thundered into it than "think faithfully." Earnest thought, it may be hoped, will gradually refine all rubbish out of existence. Indeed, our only hope, under God, is in earnest thought, and in effort corresponding to such thought.

Each mind is a possible Princedom under God.—Every man's mind I look upon as a possible Princedom under God, the sovereignty of which he may not demit in favour of any man or body of men. Each man himself stands responsible to God, and to God alone, for his stewardship of that Princedom. It must be taken as a first principle in all his science, inclusive of theology, that his final

authority for all high things is necessarily himself. All the popes that ever lived, sitting in a row—although it included Peter whom we reverence—all of them, I say, sitting in one row and saying exactly the same thing in exactly the same tone of voice, could have no authority in spiritual or any other matters, equal to that of our own consciousness. All the philosophers, from Thales down to Messrs. Clodd and Morison, can have no authority with us comparable to that of our own consciousness. In all things our own consciousness is our highest knowledge and criterion and warranty of truth. As Mr. Swinburne says—

“Only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.”¹

If all the millionfold volumes in the British Museum asserted a thing which was contrary to our own understanding, it would be not merely our right but our strict duty to back our own understanding against all the volumes in the British Museum. If it were possible for an archangel to alight before us and to say: “Believe a certain thing against your own consciousness or stand condemned,” it would be undutiful and base upon our part to obey. I speak with all reverence to higher powers. In fact we could not obey if we wished: we could only, in such circumstances, pretend to obey; and merely to pretend to entertain a belief, is to be a hypocrite and a liar.

And in addition to the master-authority of Common Sense, we have the voice of Holy Writ supporting our contention. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (yea, try them!), “because many false prophets are gone out into the world”—yea, many false prophets. Keep a sharp lookout on the false prophets. Test them, try them. They are probably the most dangerous and damnable set of persons under the sun.

The Intellectual Pawnshop.—In any case, it must always

¹ *Poems*, vol. ii. p. 8.

be hideous treason to God when ecclesiastical corporations, such as the Roman Brotherhoods, proceed to exact "blind obedience" from men.¹ It is like saying to them—"Swear not to go into the sunlight, but in all times coming, to take your illumination from our turnip-lantern alone." Worse, indeed. To swear blind obedience to any man, or to any body of men whatever, is to place your brains in actual pawn with them. Rome has hitherto been the great spiritual and intellectual pawnshop of the world. Other Churches have done the same kind of business on a very large and desolating scale. Now this kind of business cannot be abolished too soon; for until the human brain is redeemed from pawn, it must necessarily lie waste and accursed in the ecclesiastical repositories. The victims of the Church should therefore hasten to their ecclesiastical uncle's, and in a tone of thunder, if necessary, redeem their brains at once. When a man's brains are out, the man is not at home. Intellectually, it is obvious that you might as well have your brains tinned-up and hermetically sealed, as delivered over to the "blind obedience" of Rome or any other external authority. Indeed, I surmise that all good men and true, if they apprehended their highest interests, would prefer to have them tinned-up.

Prove all things.—All proof is simply a bringing home

¹ Vaughan: *St. Thomas of Aquin*, p. 68. When Descartes said "I submit all my opinions to the authority of the Church," I suppose he was simply throwing dust in the Church's eyes, and taking precautions for the safety of his skin. Before his time, Marsilio Ficino had closed his "Platonic Theology" with the formula—*In omnibus quæ aut hic aut alibi a me tractantur tantum assertum esse volo quantum ab ecclesia comprobatur*. After him it appears that this formula was frequently used. Erdmann: *History of Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 598. "Descartes had proposed to publish his *Monde* anonymously, in order, he writes to Mersenne, that he might be free to disclaim it," and again "that he had at first resolved" (after hearing of the persecution of Galileo) "to burn all his papers, for that he would never prosecute philosophy at the risk of being censured by his Church." Mahaffy: *Life of Descartes*, p. 59. Such is human folly; such is human depravity,—to be extenuated, however, when manifested in view of the gallows or the stake.

of conviction to consciousness. Thus, let it be noticed that all first principles are, in themselves, so many *highest conceivable* proofs.¹ There is no rational departure from this position. In this sense, therefore, prove all things and hold fast that which is good—actually good. Probability is such proof as is not complete—not fully brought home to consciousness, not fully convincing. To assert as true what is contrary to, or without sufficient, evidence, is to speak falsehood or folly.

Even if we were told that a person was inspired, it would be religiously incumbent upon us to put all his words into the crucible of Reason²—the God-given faculty by which we test words. Having no *a priori* assurance that any person living or dead, is or was inspired, there is no rational alternative but to place all utterance claiming our attention, into that sacred crucible. Let there be no cowardly hedging on lurching about the truth. Depend upon it that God did not intend any of His creatures to hedge or lurch about anything however trifling, much less about Religion.

Mere Imitators and Irrational Disciples of any person are but slaves.—It is all-important at the outset of every philosophical inquiry to vindicate the authority of Consciousness, the supremacy of Common Sense. Nothing great can be done by any one, but under the warranty of his own conscious approval. Where is the slave or copier of “authorities” even in Politics, Art, or Literature? Study, for example, the last paragraph of the second chapter of Gibbon’s chief work:—“The love of letters almost inseparable from peace and refinement was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines . . . but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single

¹ A truth which most writers on philosophy have yet to realise.

² By Reason I mean the whole intellectual apparatus,—not merely the logical faculty.

writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference, from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every genuine attempt to exercise the powers or enlarge the limits of the human mind. . . . The name of poet was almost forgotten; that of orator was usurped by the Sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning; and the doctrine of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.”¹—To receive and copy “authority” in any matter within our own competence, is to die intellectually and spiritually. Everything of high worth we should know not as of “authority,” but as of personal conviction. When you go to an “authority,” go to him not to surrender your brains but to receive information. All the “angels, authorities and powers” in the Universe must, if they would speak to us properly and profitably, address themselves to our Common Sense.

The devastations effected by irrational saints.—What is a saint, even, without Common Sense? An irrational saint?—if such a person be possible. Think of the deadly devastations accomplished by the naturally mild Saint Louis in his crusading fury.² Think of the oceans of blood which Peter the Hermit caused to flow. A deadly thing is zeal not according to knowledge—zeal without Common Sense. Even the Apostle Paul without Common Sense was — what? Saul of Tarsus “breathing out

¹ *The Decline and Fall*, vol. i. pp. 92–3. In the same spirit John Ruskin writes—“Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which, invention has no share; never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end; never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works.” *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. 6, 17.

² Hallam: *Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 41.

threatenings and slaughter" against the first Christians ; a greater scourge, he alone, without Common Sense and as a destroyer of intellect, than a thousand of the worst kind of secular criminals.

Even kindness should be rational.—Notice also that your very kindness must be kept strictly under the lordship and governance of Common Sense, if you wish to do any substantial good by it. Universal Jam would not avail the world. If you wished to surrender the world wholly to the Prince of Flies, your plan would be to give every man as much jam as he might demand. Every good prescription for the ills of mankind, mental or corporeal, must bear the clear, bold signature of Common Sense, if it is to be a blessing and not a curse. Any prescription which does not bear that clear, bold signature, should be carefully committed to the flames at the earliest opportunity.

Salvation means coming to our spiritual senses.—Salvation itself practically means coming to our spiritual senses. All teachers and missionaries especially, should digest and assimilate this simple proposition. Preaching religion should not consist of occult, transcendental or obscurantist talk, as so much of it has hitherto been. To have any real success, it must be made up of calm rational effort to bring your hearer to his spiritual senses—to the noblest knowing and understanding of himself and his wants. A truly religious man is not some esoteric, mystical kind of person, as so many preachers would have us think, but simply a person in full possession and in the regular exercise of his noblest faculties:—in other words, a lofty character. Would that this truth were clearly apprehended by everybody. Religion is not abnegation and dethronement of Common Sense, as so much theological talk implies. It is but the resolute assertion of Common Sense in Spiritual things, together, of course, with loyal and heroic adhesion

thereto, in practice. This is all we can have for moral regeneration.

Religion is supreme Common Sense in thought and practice.—For instance, if we could induce the whole human race to have a good wash every day, even that would be a considerable triumph,—a point gained for religion,—a clear advance in civilisation; for it would signify an advance or general improvement in human character: all a matter of Common Sense. Even this achievement, I submit, would be a real blow in the teeth to Beelzebub, a blow which would probably help to loosen them more than has been done by all the combined efforts of all the school-theologians as such, since the world began. Consider how enormously the characters of most of the early and mediæval saints, even, would have been improved by liberal, diurnal washings with plain soap and water,—not holy soap and water, but simply the plain abstersives, ordinary soap and water. Religion itself, I insist, is wholly a rational matter, a matter of supreme Common Sense. Without any hocus-pocus about it at all, I apprehend that if we possessed unadulterated knowledge of the subject, we should find that Christ's one object in this world was to improve human character; an achievement which so far as it goes, must always be accompanied with the happiest consequences. The highest meaning of Reform is this—becoming more honest, more resolutely upright and pure, in our life and conversation; in which sense, the individual can do far more for the Church than the Church for the individual. If our clergy generally, could but realise this great and simple truth, it would be a happy thing for the world. Let us earnestly recommend it to their most reverent care.

General Conclusion.—From all kinds of considerations, therefore, it would appear that the study of our own individual consciousness is the only gateway to firm knowledge, and, indeed, the only basis upon which firm

knowledge can be built. Unfortunately most men fail to notice, or if noticing, fail to bestow steady observation upon this great truth.

"All things without which round about we see,
We seek to know and how therewith to do ;
But that whereby we reason, live and be
Within ourselves, we strangers are thereto.

We seek to know the moving of each sphere,
And the strange cause of the ebbs and flows of Nile,
But of the clocke within our breast we bear,
The subtle motions we forget the while.

We that acquaint ourselves with every zone
And pass both tropics and behold the Poles,
When we come home are to ourselves unknown
And unacquainted still with our own souls.

We study speech, but others we persnade ;
We leechcraft learn, but others cure with it ;
We interpret laws which other men have made,
But read not those which in our hearts are writ."¹

There's the mighty mischief. Men forget the Inner Oracle—Common Sense, in relation to nearly all high concerns. Not so in low concerns. All men,—priests, theologians and philosophers included, demand that their barbers, cooks, cutlers, tailors, shoemakers, engine-drivers, etc., shall be men of approved common sense, and that they shall found their various arts on its matchless principles. *A fortiori*, we demand and will accept nothing less than common sense, from priests, theologians and philosophers in everything pertaining to the wants of the human soul.

Forsake Common Sense, and most good things, probably all good things, will forthwith proceed to forsake you. It is a tremendous truth propounded by Solomon that "fools" (*i.e.* persons of no common sense) "die for

¹ Sir John Davies : "Of Humau Knowledge " *Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 20. (Grosart's ed.)

want of wisdom"—in sheer stupidity. Even to help a fool, too frequently increases folly. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

It should be understood then, that what is reported to us by our own corporeal and spiritual faculties, together of course, with the inductions made thereupon and the deductions drawn therefrom, is all that we can possibly have for truth. It should be understood that our corporeal and spiritual faculties themselves, united in consciousness, are in all cases the ultimate test of truth. Consciousness is a magazine of first principles. In a word, before we can even cross the threshold of any department of science or art, we must accept the doctrine of the veracity of consciousness, the sovereignty of Common Sense. Before we can enter into any kind of learning, we must postulate the veracity of consciousness. The slightest inquiry about anything involves absurdity unless it be made with reference and in subjection to this only conceivable standard or criterion of truth.

CHAPTER III

CONSCIOUSNESS MUST BE ACCEPTED IN ITS INTEGRITY

No man really knows anything properly until he has entered into deep communion with himself. True knowledge and conviction of any truth are to be educed, mainly, from within, not imposed from without: hence the utter folly of all external, believe-or-perish systems of external instruction and salvation. It should be realised, once for all, that even if the Sons of Thunder desire a conference with us on any subject, whether it be sacred or secular, such a conference can be of no high significance to us unless they are prepared to address themselves to our divinely created common sense, our rational faculties. It should be understood once for all that whilst we may err, Reason itself cannot err,—that Reason must be our final authority on any conceivable subject. Nor should there even be any talk of “right” Reason. It is tautology to speak of “right” Reason as much as it would be to speak of “honest” Honesty. All Reason is, *eo ipso*, right. If anything is wrong, it is not rational. Therefore we must strive to follow Reason in all things. Notice, for example, that Reason always demands from us the most noble conduct, even if such conduct is to involve us in death without burial. In other words, Reason itself cannot in any case fail to bring us to the most noble conclusions. We know of nothing of noble significance that has yet been said or done, which has not harmonised with Common Sense. We can conceive no policy of noble significance,

opposed to Common Sense. How shall we interpret Nature at all, if not by the lawful use of our faculties!

But whilst the rational consciousness in its various faculties must be accepted as the standard of truth, it is quite clear that the information which it gives must be accepted in all its integrity; that it must be correctly taken and correctly interpreted—*i.e.* without addition thereto, or subtraction therefrom.

Danger of mis-reporting the faculties. — A cloth-merchant with a standard yard-measure, may, without reproach to the yard-stick, measure his cloth wrongly. A farmer with an imperial bushel-measure may mis-measure his grain without any reproach to the imperial tub. So may philosophers and theologians muddle problems and vitiate results by a misuse of the divinely created standard faculties of their own consciousness. In all the cases supposed, the mistake arises not from any imperfection of the tool, but solely from the imperfection of the man handling it.

Or put it in another way. A messenger faithfully reports that a deceased uncle has put you down for a legacy of £100, and you thereupon report to others, that you have had a legacy of £10,000 left to you. No reproach to the messenger is involved herein. You are in fault yourself: not he. So in philosophy. A man's faculties tell him a certain thing in strict good faith. He proceeds to place some interpretation upon it which it does not yield; or to report something erroneous concerning it, — setting forth, it may be, some mere appearance as a reality, or some reality, perhaps, as a mere appearance. No reproach to the faculty. You mis-report your nose, you mis-report your ears, your eyes, your understanding, and then, getting into a general muddle thereby, you proceed to say most unjust things about your nose, ears, eyes and understanding. The philosophers are very frequently found committing this

absurdity. As Sir William Hamilton expresses it—"They have seldom or never taken the facts of consciousness, the whole facts of consciousness and nothing but the facts of consciousness. They have either overlooked, or rejected, or interpolated."¹ They must not treat witnesses in this fashion.

"Is it then so easy," one might ask, "to interpret the faculties aright?" Not so very easy, I answer, but it can be done with the exercise of due care and honesty.

The doctrine exemplified.—For example, you observe the great primary distinction between you and not-you, just as I observe the great primary distinction between me and not-me. As a simple matter of fact, you, implicitly at least, cannot but observe, and I cannot but observe, that distinction. You are conscious and invincibly cognisant of the duality of existence: that is to say, you are invincibly cognisant of the existence of yourself and of a universe which is not yourself. "When I concentrate my attention on the simplest act of perception, I return from my observation with the most irresistible conviction of two facts, or rather two branches of the same fact—that I am and that something different from me exists. In this act I am conscious of myself as the perceiving subject and of an external reality as the object perceived; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible moment of intuition."²

First, as to the ego itself. I must accept the natural dogma that "I am I"; you must accept the natural dogma that "you are you," in all its simplicity and integrity. It will not do to say like some of our modern philosophers that you are "a pure fiction derived from nonentity." In saying such a thing, you do not get rid of your "you" in the very least: you only state in very awkward and indirect terms that *your* particular "you" is

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 267-8.

² *Ib.* vol. i. pp. 288, 292.

a rather stupid person. It will not do to say, like another modern philosopher, that your "you" or "ego" is "nothing but the transitory state of the moment."¹ This last philosopher knows that as far as he is concerned, his particular "ego" instead of being but the "transitory state of the moment," has actually existed in its egoism for a period of at least sixty or seventy years; so that in his feigned philosophic pronouncement, he does not render the facts of consciousness in their integrity. Unless you would utterly stultify yourself and render yourself ridiculous, you must accept in all its integrity the consciousness that *you are you*; I, that *I am I*. Every philosopher should realise this truth permanently. The facts of the case are so simple and obtrusive, that no further discussion of them should be necessary. The same argument applies to all kinds of monists, whether pantheistic or idealistic.

How objective truth is determined.—Then as to our knowledge of the external world, the objective is seen under subjective conditions. The ego is conscious of the non-ego—the subjective of the objective. Indeed the consciousness of the ego (*i.e.* of the individual, the personal, the subjective) necessarily implies the consciousness of the non-ego (*i.e.* of the non-individual, the non-personal, the objective); but whilst thus invincibly conscious of the objective itself, I am mainly conscious of it as it is revealed to me through my external senses; whose conjoint, not isolated, testimony, must be taken, interpreted, supplemented, and reduced to order by the internal or intellectual faculties—the thinking power. The thinking power gathers together the various reports of the other faculties, sits in judgment upon these reports, and finds, in the whole, a unity of truth. All science might be said to be psychocentric.

The corporeal senses do not judge.—This should be care-

¹ W. T. Davison, quoting Bain and Spencer: *The Christian Conscience*, p. 63.

fully noticed: the corporeal senses do not judge at all. This one fact destroys the materialistic psychology—as set forth, for example, in the ponderous works of Mr. Herbert Spencer or Mr. Alexander Bain; destroys, indeed, all the Illusionist psychologies. “Sensation,” as Professor Seth expresses it, “is the condition of perception; but so far from the two terms being interchangeable, sensation as a purely subjective state, has no place in the objective knowledge founded upon it.”¹ In other words, it is only by subsequent analysis that we discover that our perceptions arise out of, or rather, are concurrent with, our sensations, the process by which the perceptions arise being utterly inscrutable.

It is the Intellect that cognises and judges.—By utterly inscrutable processes, objects are presented by the corporeal senses to the Intellect in various aspects, in which it cognises—also by utterly inscrutable processes—a consistent fabric of external facts, which, taken together, it calls the Universe. Not only so. Whilst the Intellect is constantly receiving the spontaneous presentments of the corporeal faculties, it is also able to direct, concentrate and employ those faculties towards obtaining further knowledge of the Universe, and in applying the properties of the Universe to the satisfying of its own wants.

Mind, like body (and the body like the Mind), is a harmony of parts and faculties—an organic unity in plurality, and a plurality in unity; a whole in parts and parts constituting an organic whole. The chief interest of the whole is the interest of each part, just as in the body; and the interest of the part is the interest of the whole. Much confusion has arisen from regarding and treating each faculty as if it were capable of independent action.

All science, all theory, all speculation, all inquiry, is an attempt (conscious or unconscious) to satisfy the thinking power or Mind, which we take to be in harmony with some

¹ *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 96.

higher Mind—the All-Sufficient Primate and Ruler of the Universe.

The doctrine exemplified.—Look down a long, straight avenue of trees. As it stretches away from you, the grass borders and the rows of trees on each side of the path appear to draw nearer together. As a matter of fact they don't do so; and in considering the problem, you will find that if you rely upon your eyes alone, they will mislead you as to the real facts of the case. But you must not rely upon your eyes alone. Their evidence as to the objective totality of the scene presented by the avenue is insufficient. Your eyesight is only a part of your cognitive apparatus—a witness which testifies to nothing beyond the optical presentment made by the avenue, and in respect of which its testimony is quite correct. But you have further sources of information. You can apply to your tactile faculty and to your locomotive powers as well; and then, bringing your intellect to bear upon the information furnished by your combined visual and tactile faculties, aided by your perambulatory powers, you may easily obtain the actual length and breadth of the avenue. In short, you must treat your individual faculties as but partial or limited witnesses, and construct the objective truth out of their joint report.

Look at the sun at mid-day. Your single sense of sight sees an orbicular lucent object in the heavens, an object of about the circumference of a good big cheddar cheese. So far, quite right; but you must not accept the information of that one sense as complete: you must supplement it with information furnished by the whole Intellect, and you will have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the sun is much larger than a cheddar cheese. You must apply the same kind of method to the investigation of all celestial bodies, and, indeed, to every kind of body. Then you will find that the whole Intellect with its complete complement of faculties, can so fully supplement the

information furnished by the visual sense alone, that you are able to arrive at an accurate science of the laws of optics—the science of perspective,—linear, aërial, and so forth, concerning which there is no dubiety.¹

“Sense thinks the planets spheres not much asunder ;
What tells us then, their distance is so far ?
Sense thinks the lightning borne before the thunder ;
What tells us then, they both together are !”²

Intellect, obviously, with the help of the corporeal senses.³

No single corporeal sense seems to furnish full information.—No bodily sense, taken singly, appears to yield full information touching its object. By the sense of hearing alone, the intellect cannot correctly localise a sound ; by the nostrils alone, it cannot localise an odour ; by the tactile sense alone, it cannot accurately localise a touch ; by the sense of taste alone, it can scarcely arrive at objective conclusions. “The correlation of the senses, as

¹ John Stuart Mill lived in a state of hopeless confusion on this important subject. Discussing “fallacies of observation,” he remarks—“People fancied they saw the sun rise and set. . . . We now know that they saw no such thing. . . . It seems strange that such an instance of this of the testimony of the senses pleaded with the most entire conviction in favour of something which was a mere inference of judgment, should not have opened the eyes of the bigots of Common Sense.” *System of Logic*, vol. ii. p. 357. Here he himself falls into the fallacy of *non-observation*. He has failed even to apprehend what “common sense” means—failed to observe that *it is necessarily the whole mind*—i.e. *the intellect, inclusive of the corporeal senses, which constitutes the common sense*, and that the corporeal senses themselves are *only a part* of the mental apparatus. This disastrous error is common to all the opponents of Common Sense.

² Sir John Davies : “Of the Soule of Man,” *Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 36.

³ This appears to have been Aristotle’s doctrine of perception. According to Sir W. Hamilton, “Aristotle’s doctrine of the assimilation, in the sensitive process, of that which perceives with that which is perceived, may reasonably be explained to mean that the object and subject are then so brought into mutual relation as, by their coefficient energy, to constitute an act of cognition, one and indivisible, and in which the reality is to us as we perceive it to be.” Hamilton’s *Reid*, note, p. 827. In other words, perception results from the coefficient energy of the Intellect and the corporeal senses, that of the latter arising in response to external stimulation.

we may term it, is shown in the familiar trick of getting a blindfolded person to tell whether he is drinking port or sherry, or whether the pipe he is smoking is alight or not.”¹ In a word, all sensuous consciousness has to be carried home to, and interpreted in, the intellectual consciousness.

“If we had nought but sense (bodily); each living wight
Which we call brute, would be more sharp than we,
As having senses apprehensive might
In a more clear and excellent degree.”²

All the Illusionists are in a state of utter confusion regarding the question of external perception. They fail to notice that we are continually engaged, as a matter of course, in distinguishing between realities and appearances,—between facts and phenomena; a consideration which, even by itself, should satisfy them as to the authenticity of our perceptions, and convince them that it is essentially the mind that sees; in connection with which doctrine, they should also note that we can think of other intelligences, up to the Deity, as seeing and knowing what is external to them, without necessarily supposing that they possess organs corresponding with ours.

It is necessary to discriminate between Facts and Phenomena.—It is to be noted that writers in general have fallen into much laxity and inaccuracy of language touching facts and phenomena—a misfortune which has given rise to some confusion in mental science. Whilst, for example, the sun regarded by the visual intelligence alone, only *appears* to go round the earth, it is discovered by the discursive intelligence that it is the earth which, as a matter of fact, revolves round the sun; yet in common parlance, the appearance and the reality, so widely different in their nature, are indiscriminately spoken of as “phenomena”—obviously, a great abuse of the word, which should be reserved to express the appearance only, whilst the word

¹ Edward Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, p. 94.

² Sir John Davies: “Of the Soule of Man,” *Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 37.

"fact," or occurrence, should be properly limited to express the reality. How does the opponent of Common Sense propose to distinguish between facts and phenomena?

Of course, it could also be contended that there is the *phenomenal* fact. Thus we should have facts *phenomenal* and facts *real*.

Corporeal senses sometimes defective, or abnormally keen.—

Again, the senses are sometimes found defective, sometimes abnormally keen. As everybody knows, some persons are, what is called, colour-blind; so many, indeed, that Railway Companies have found it necessary, I believe, to make their signal-men and engine-drivers undergo a colour examination. The same with regard to hearing, which may be defective to almost any extent. In fact the sense ranges from great acuteness of hearing down to total deafness. Then there are those curious instances of note-deafness, in which, though Doistyvoisky himself be playing upon a grand piano, the note-deaf person may suppose him to be thumping on a mere deal board. A case of the kind is detailed in *Mind*, for April 1878. And then, at the other end of the scale, there is the delicate ear which detects in music the slightest discord. In a word, your sensuous consciousness may largely differ from mine as to what are called the secondary qualities of the external world.

Artificial aids obtainable by some of the senses.—Of course, if our external or corporeal senses were stronger and keener, they might tell us a great deal more than they now do about the external world. Even with artificial aids,—microscopes, telescopes, microphones, etc., we can largely increase our knowledge of external things. It is quite conceivable, also, that we might be endowed with much keener, or even with additional, senses, which would furnish us with a still larger fund of information:¹ but, as a matter of fact, we must be contented to take our apparatus of senses as we find it, both as to the number and

¹ *e.g.* Brown speculates on this subject, *Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 96.

extent of its powers and capacities. More than this: we have no reasonable alternative but to accept the information which this apparatus of senses places at our disposal, and to interpret and act upon that information to the best of our ability—always remembering that it is the Intellect, as an organic whole, which perceives, and not the Intellect as an inorganic assemblage of parts. Should we refuse to do this, our refusal must be altogether fatuous, rendering us at once ridiculous and doomed.

Stewart makes the following excellent remarks on this subject, namely,—that Consciousness must be accepted and interpreted in its integrity. “The suspense of judgment,” he writes, “which is proper with respect to particular opinions till they be once fairly examined, can never justify scepticism with respect to the general laws of the human mind. Our belief of the sun’s motion is not a conclusion to which we are necessarily led by any such law, but an inference rashly drawn from the perceptions of sense, which do not warrant such an inference. All that we see is that a relative change of position between us and the sun takes place; and this fact which is made known to us by our senses, no subsequent discovery of philosophy pretends to disprove. It is not, therefore, the evidence of perception that is overturned by the Copernican system, but a judgment or inference of the understanding, of the rashness of which every person must be fully sensible, the moment he is made to reflect with due attention on the circumstances of the case; and the doctrine which this system substitutes instead of our first crude apprehensions on the subject, is founded not on any process of reasoning *a priori*, but on the demonstrable inconsistency of these apprehensions with the various phenomena which our perceptions present to us.”¹

How subjective truth is determined.—The ego knows also that it can perceive truth within itself, *e.g.* that two

¹ *Collected Works*, vol. iii. pp. 61-2.

halves make a whole. It is in fact self-conscious, or by exerting itself may become self-conscious, of an unlimited number of subjective truths. By due effort, most people, probably, could find the Multiplication Table written upon their Intellects. Despite Mr. John Stuart Mill's protests, we must regard this as an absolutely Catholic document.

By due effort, we find also that an infinitude of irrefragable inferences may be drawn from the Multiplication Table and the principles involved in it.

The ego also knows that it possesses certain original perceptions and fixed principles, *e.g.* the perception of the existence of Space and Time, and of the great fact of the Universe itself. All these are what I call Dogmas of Intelligence, behind which we cannot go. A very wonderful being, indeed, is this ego, when it fairly considers itself and enters into consultation with itself.

The ego knows too, that it has emotions and passions and appetites.

I know, also, that I possess freedom of will. You, as to yourself, know the corresponding fact, in spite of any theory which you may hold to the contrary. In the teeth of all theories of heredity, or evolution, or determinism of any kind, or race, or climate, or environment, I am what is properly called a free being; *i.e.* I possess the power of acting in many of my affairs according to judgment, deliberation, choice. I possess the power of acting according to what appear to me to be the most eligible principles and considerations, even in spite of danger, discomfort, and death. As Aristotle says—"There are some things which it is wrong to do, even on compulsion; and a man ought rather to undergo the most dreadful sufferings, even death, than do them."¹ I can do certain things or refrain from doing them, *as I choose*; "hence praise and blame are bestowed with

¹ *Ethics*, Bk. iii. i. 9.

reference to our being or not being compelled.”¹ “The voluntary is that of which the principle is in the doer himself.”² Let it be noted that any higher kind of freedom is utterly unthinkable. Test this doctrine to the utmost extent of your ingenuity. What further criterion can you desire,—what further criterion of freedom can you conceive beyond a power of deliberating, and choosing between conflicting motives or possibilities of action? Wherever there is power of deliberation and choice, there is freedom of will. Wherever there is no power of deliberation and choice, there is no freedom of will. You may for example, choose or not choose to drink a glass of wine, but you have no choice as to what the physiological effects of drinking it will be. In power of choice the note of freedom is perfect. Can the most resolute determinist suggest a more complete freedom? I don’t think so. Now, this power of choice is the fact assured to us in consciousness: delivered to us,—i.e. mankind in general, with such overwhelming authority that the Laws and Religions of all kingdoms and nations and tribes under the sun, accept it more or less clearly as an axiom of their social existence and organisation. Civilisation itself is mainly dependent upon the truth of this axiom. I do not say, of course, that heredity, race,³ climate, and environment have no influence upon us. That were absurd. Individuals, doubtlessly, differ largely as to the strength of their volitional powers. There may even be lunatics and diseased persons who have practically ceased to be free beings, just as there are children who have not yet attained to volitional freedom. All this is immediately admitted; but at present we are talking neither of infants, nor lunatics, nor diseased persons, but of normal, adult mankind; with whom the consciousness of freedom is so absolute that they all assume it, and, more or less,

¹ *Ethics*, Bk. iii. i. 10.

² *Ib.*, Bk. iii. i. 21.

act upon it. The moment you begin to say that your ego is mechanical, or chemical, or vegetable, you falsify your consciousness, which declares that you possess volitional powers. This, then, must also be taken as manifest—that you possess will; that—

“Sovereignty is in the mind
Where'er it pleases to exert its force.”¹

I am conscious, too, that “I” have a sense of right and wrong,—an ethical sense,—conscience: which has been defined as “the Soul’s sense of right and wrong in motive.”² As the same writer says—“A man does infallibly know whether he means right or wrong in any deliberate choice,” and in that field, “conscience is not educable.” In this acceptation, “an erring conscience is a chimera”—as Kant expresses it. It is so in spite of all babble about “inherited habits,” and so forth. Antigone says in the play—

“O my father! 'tis not right
Though he should prove the basest of the base
To render ill for ill.”³

She is giving voice to the moral consciousness. How we come by such a Godlike possession is quite inscrutable, but at the same time, the fact of the possession is incontestable; and it can only be silenced in the individual by long neglect or abuse.

Without injustice to liars, I think we may safely assume that no liar supposes to himself that he is telling the truth; no thief that he is an honest man; no person quite ignorant of a thing, really believes that he knows it; no one whose knowledge of a thing is superficial, really supposes that it is deep; no quibbler on foot, who does not know when he is quibbling and grinding a lie

¹ Vanbrugh: *The Relapse*, v. 4.

² Cook: *Monday Lectures* (2nd Series), p. 141.

³ Sophocles: *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1189–91 (Plumptre’s tr.).

between his teeth. I think, indeed, we may safely assume that no sinner commits any kind of wickedness with heart approval; that nobody ever does or intends to do a virtuous deed with qualms of conscience: so that as far as mere knowledge, or want of knowledge, is concerned, sinners seem to be without excuse. A man may very easily be mistaken in an opinion or a policy, but no sane man exists, I should say, who knows not whether his *intentions* be good or evil. Even Parolles may have to say—

“If my heart were great
'T would burst at this . . .’
Rust, sword; cool, blushes.”¹

How moral rightness is determined.—But now, notice here that rightness, either as to spiritual or material things, must be the consent of your whole ego,—i.e. of your *self* regarded as an organic unity. You have a desire for a thing. That desire is a psychological fact,—a fact of consciousness, indisputable; but the mere existence of the desire gives no warranty that it should be satisfied. There is within you that other faculty, the ethical, which asks—“Is it right that I should gratify the desire?” The ethical faculty may answer “No,” in the most decisive manner. This answer is another splendid fact of consciousness—as illustrious as if an Archangel spoke to us. Moral rightness thus demands that the desire shall not be gratified; that the higher fact or dictate of consciousness shall rule the lower. Apart from the due ordinating, co-ordinating, and subordinating of the conflicting elements in our Nature under the central dominion of the intelligent ego, the human mind would be a chaos.

Some amiable persons are disposed to forget that there is such a passion as *right* anger. Aristotle has well described it. He “who feels anger on proper

¹ *All's Well that Ends Well*, iv. 3.

occasions, at proper persons, and for a proper length of time, is an object of praise; for by the meek man we mean him who is undisturbed and not carried away by passion, but who feels anger according to the dictates of reason on proper occasion and for a proper length of time . . . for those who do not feel anger at proper cases are thought to be fools," etc.¹ For instance, a thief has stolen something. Your anger is raised against the thief—a fact of consciousness, true and right as such; but you subsequently learn that the thief was starving, or that his poor child was starving, and that he committed the theft in desperation. In the well-governed mind, anger thereupon yields to compassion. One feeling gives place to another through the ruling influence of the intelligence and the nobler passion, and the mind thereby attains the noble attitude of ethical rightness.

The proper motive of virtue.—Again, the philosophers who ascribe virtue to mere selfishness, make this mistake because they fail to observe and accept the facts of consciousness in their integrity. It is quite true that the doing of good must ever bring spiritual advantage to the doer, but this is not the only, nor yet the prime, motive of the virtuous man. His proper motive is the good of men without special regard to himself; whilst the mainspring of the selfish man's actions is ever that of special regard for himself. Indeed, if it were possible for a person to devise benefits for others with a view to his own particular and sole advantage (and such

¹ *Ethics*, Bk. iv. c. v. 2-3. "The affections are the work of God; they are not radically evil; they are given us for useful purposes and are therefore not superfluous." Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 18. But we must avoid that kind of anger which, it seems, Lactantius describes as "a cruel tempest of the mind making a man's eyes sparkle fire and stare, teeth gnash in his head, his tongue stutter, his face become pale or red; and what more filthy imitation," he asks, "can be of a madman?" Burton: *Anatomy of Melancholy*, vol. i. p. 359.

conduct is conceivable), such acts would not evoke the esteem of observers, nor even the intelligent approbation of that person himself. In a word, such actions could not be virtuous. Thus all vice is unsocial and properly described as selfish; whilst all virtue is social and properly described as unselfish. If we will but consent to consult consciousness in its integrity, we shall find that we all despise, and cannot but despise, the whole herd of base, self-coddling, debilitated, and valetudinarian persons.

The Law of Consciousness broken by many.—Happily, ordinary people have no delusions on this subject, namely, the general supremacy of the Law of Consciousness when taken in its integrity; but unhappily, innumerable philosophers have come, or pretended to have come, to the strangest conclusions concerning it. They have not been contented to accept the facts of consciousness in their integrity; but, as Sir William Hamilton observes, they have “been pleased to accept it only under such qualifications as suited their systems to devise.”¹ That most erudite thinker says that he is only aware of a single philosopher before Reid “who did not reject, at least in part, the fact as consciousness affords it.”²

(A) THE LAW BROKEN BY THE MATERIALISTS

Take the Materialist. He reports that all is matter and inevitably subject to material laws: which are either mechanical, chemical, or vital. According to him, man is nothing more than a machine, or a chemical apparatus, or a vitalised body. Now, as a matter of fact, I think we may safely take it that the materialist's own consciousness immediately contradicts his professed theory. True, man is partly mechanical. A large number of bodily movements are made on mechanical principles; but for all that, a man

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 292.

² *Ib.* vol. i. p. 293.

knows,—is conscious, that he is more than a machine, and that he can actually, to a large extent, *consider, direct and control* his bodily movements. “Exceptionally wide in the Universe is the extent, entirely subordinate is the mission of mechanism.”¹ True, he is a kind of chemical alembic, but he knows that he is more than a chemical alembic, and that he must exercise intelligence as to what he puts into that alembic. True, he possesses an animal body with desires and appetites and passions in plenty; but at the same time he knows that he is more than an animal; that he may, if he choose, more or less effectively, control his animal desires, appetites and passions; nay, he himself, the pretended materialist, is firmly convinced if he be honest with himself, that the more effectively he masters the brutal elements in his constitution, the more respectable, noble and venerable does he become, not only in the esteem of others but also in the esteem of himself. In short, his own consciousness, if properly consulted, forces him to the conclusion that the mechanical, the chemical and the brutal only make up, or should only make up, a small part of his daily life. He knows that all of him which is truly entitled to be called “man” is beside and above and beyond the mechanical, the chemical or the brutal; and that if he venture to live a merely mechanical, chemical and brutal life, he will be no better than the man in Maundevile’s *Adventures* who “lived like a swine in a sty to be made fat.”

Just look for a moment at some of the words in the last paragraph—the words “consider,” “direct” and “control.” In what part of a machine are directing, considering or controlling springs, rods or valves to be found? In no part. It has to be considered, directed and controlled from the outside wholly. Man, therefore, cannot be a mere machine; for he to some extent, considers, directs and controls, or should consider, direct and control himself. In

¹ Lotze: quoted by Cook, *Monday Lectures* (2nd Series), p. 61.

addition to being acted upon, he acts. Or take the word "choose." A chemical Alembic does not "choose"; chemical elements do not choose, but rigidly operate according to their nature. "Respectable," "estimable," "venerable," "noble," — such words neither apply to machines, nor to chemical apparatuses, nor to chemical elements, nor to brutes. They only apply to men in so far as they have minds, good minds; and, indeed, a man is not a man who has no mind. I would fain help our materialistic friends to realise that they are more than skin and bone and ponderable stuff. A man is a man in so far only as he has a mind; and he is intrinsically noble or venerable, or base and contemptible according to the quantity and quality of his mental endowments and acquisitions, his invisible or spirited possessions.

Again, it is ridiculous to speak of "duty" and "ought" in connection with machinery, chemical elements or brutes. This truth is known to the poorest guttersnipe. At least it is known to him implicitly. It is known, too, in all the police courts.

Again, materialism renders the thought of either love or hatred to our fellow-beings, quite preposterous. Under any materialistic hypothesis, we might as well speak of love or hatred in a steam-engine, or in a hydraulic press, as in a man. All moral acts necessarily imply voluntary power, spiritual freedom. Thus, the materialist's elements do not account for man. He is mainly to be found in something wholly foreign and superior to the mechanical, the chemical or the brutal. The materialist, I repeat, necessarily sinks every man (theoretically of course) to the level of the sow. In the materialistic horizon there can be nothing more august than the presence of poor grumpy.

The materialist may know all this as well as we do, if he will only consult his own consciousness about it properly.

He cannot escape, indeed, from such knowledge, if he will but give himself a fair chance. In proclaiming materialism, he is simply rejecting all the principal facts of consciousness, and building his house upon a bog—a very soft, moving bog, which is likely to carry both him and his house away into strange and sorrowful regions.

Materialism in its more gross forms would not be worth noticing but for the fact that it affords a very convenient harbour “for the nidulation, hatching and nourishing of many parasitic” animals. On the principles of materialism, any scoundrel can justify his scoundrelism—(I have been witness of the fact), and the difference between noble and base disappears. The materialist’s advances are to be rejected utterly.

The Apostle Paul rightly asks—“What man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him?” All teaching is addressed to faculty, spirit, intellect. The history of thought teaches us that the Taught have been gradually correcting the Teachers; that the Pupils have been gradually correcting the Masters; that the Masters must—if they would be nobly successful, address themselves to the faculties of their Pupils. The Master always assumes and must always assume that the faculty of the Pupil is fed—so far as it is fed, from the Universal Reason. There is no breaking away from this Law. You cannot have any common science at all but on the assumption of a Universal Reason and of a common faculty subject to the Laws of the Universal Reason. The very existence of the Universal word “why,” affirms the existence of a universal belief in a Universal Reason. The moment the rankest materialist opens his mouth and asks “why?” he implicitly affirms his own belief in a Universal Reason, implicitly discards his theory in an implicit appeal to general Intelligence, and unconsciously announces the bankruptcy of materialism.

(B) THE LAW BROKEN BY IDEALISTS OF ALL KINDS

The Realist, Intuitionist or Man of Common Sense takes his invincible stand upon the facts and laws of consciousness as ultimate. His opponents, the Illusionists and Dubitationists of all sorts and sizes, fondly flatter themselves that they have only to deny the intuitions of Common Sense in order to deprive the Intuitionist of any remedy against them;¹ they pretend to rail at the Johnsonian argument. In so doing they make a prodigious mistake, in the very perpetration of which, they manifest sheer philosophical inaptitude. It is exactly as if a thief were gaily to assert that he had only to deny his theft in order to baffle judge and jury and escape from the correction of the stocks. Common Sense need never find any difficulty in dragging its opponent into the light and showing that he is—not a wise man.

When a lunatic takes himself to be a poached egg, it may, of course, be impossible to dislodge him from that belief; in which case we excuse him on account of his lunacy. On the same ground alone, can we excuse the "philosopher" who denies the requisitions of Common Sense. Thus, *quoad* their illusionary theories, all the illusionists appear to be either intellectually or morally bankrupt.

Like the materialist, the idealist also refuses to accept the full testimony of consciousness—and garbles it or rejects it for his own particular purposes. Certain idealists, antipodean to the materialists, say—"All is mind; there

¹ e.g. Mr. Leslie Stephen in *The English Utilitarians*, over and over again. To the statement "this is a necessary belief," it is a sufficient answer, he says, to reply, "I don't believe it"—(vol. i. p. 152): which is a fundamental error, when it can be shown that the denier himself constantly acts as if he believes it; and this is the terrible pickle in which all the opponents of Common Sense continually find themselves steeped. It is not, as Stewart says, "from any defect in the power of ratiocination or deduction that our speculative errors chiefly arise."

is no matter." According to them, the Universe is mere idea. Now, in this basal notion of their system, there is no difficulty in showing that their own consciousness immediately contradicts them. They are at war with the first axiom of all possible science, namely, that consciousness is veracious. Let us hasten to the practical test. All persons must be treated as charlatans who shun the practical test.

The practical test.—There is a row in the street, and good Bishop Berkeley, one of our idealists, hearing it, what does he do? What does he think? He does not think,—does not even fancy for one moment that the row is merely a commotion within his own ego, or under his own waist-coat,—does not think for a moment that the *esse* of the row is merely *percipi*. Not at all. He immediately and invincibly thinks of it as an actual disturbance in the street, and proceeds to open his window to have a fuller view or perception of it, firmly convinced within the circumference of his own consciousness that the window is composed of actual glass and timber, and that vital bone-and-muscle power—not idea merely, is necessary to raise it. The window being raised, the amiable bishop projects his body through the opening quite cautiously. Why? Because, whether he acknowledge it or not, he is firmly convinced in his own mind and in the very teeth of his own theories, that *esse* is not *percipi*,—that the *esse* or matter is subject to a certain law of gravitation—a law most hostile to his theory; that his own body is matter, and subject to that most exigent law; and that if he projects it through the window aperture too far, it will be in extreme danger of tumbling out into the street: a catastrophe which he is as willing and determined to prevent as any materialist in Ireland. In short, our idealistic bishop balances and controls his episcopal body as cautiously and carefully as a materialistic Clodd or Morison placed in similar circumstances: ergo, the bishop's over-

mastering consciousness of realities, manifested by his actual conduct amid such realities, absolutely effaces and gives the lie not only to his ideal theory, but to his professed belief in that ideal theory.¹

The idealist practice always opposed to the idealist theory.—The idealist takes as kindly to all material comforts as anybody else. He avoids all material dangers and inconveniences as assiduously as anybody else. He manifests as great a dislike to the death of his body as anybody else. He does not sit down upon a hot stove more readily than anybody else. Bishop Berkeley is as careful that nobody shall stamp on his corn as Mr. Clodd or Mr. Morison. Why? Simply because his own consciousness—i.e. his highest knowledge, swears against and defies his theory. His theory that his corn is mere *percipi* and not an external reality, is at war with the primary postulate of science, the veracity of consciousness. He knows, despite himself, that there is matter in the Universe as well as mind. And yet idealists ask us to take them seriously! If there be any of them left alive, let us recommend to their consideration an incidental saying of Aristotle—"Generally, it is absurd when one chides in another what he does himself or would feel inclined to do; or exhorts him to do what he does not himself, neither would be induced to do."² Briefly then, the idealist whilst

¹ There seems also to have been a school of Hindoo Berkeleys who conceived the material Universe to be nothing but an illusive representation presented by the Deity, to the mind—which illusion they characterised by the name of Maja. Brown (quoting Sir W. Jones): *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. i. p. 522. All philosophers should, as far as possible, apply the practical test to their theories, and discard them whenever they find that they will not stand the practical test. Thus, as suggested in the text, let the Illusionist try to disregard the law of gravitation *in practice*! If the philosophers would only be good enough to follow this rule steadily, if they would only be loyal to the dictates of Nature, it would save us from the wretched harassment of thousands of their confused and obstructive tomes.

² *Rhetoric*, Bk. ii. c. xxiii. 7.

professing to call in question the testimony of consciousness as to external things, has never been known to show his faith by his works; never attempted to bring his conduct into harmony with his theory: therefore the validity of consciousness remains invincible and invulnerable against the idealist just as we have found it to be invincible and invulnerable against the materialist.

Berkleian Absurdities.—A word more about this much overrated metaphysician. If *esse* were merely *percipi*, as Berkeley pretended to hold, then he had only to close his eyes to make light cease to be, and to open them again in order to make it again spring into existence. If *esse* was merely *percipi*, then he was able to annihilate and recreate the visible universe more promptly than is recorded in *Genesis*—in fact, by a mere wink! But Berkeley was not really such a lunatic as really to suppose that there was any justification for his doctrine. If he had taken a Bible oath that he really believed that *esse* was *percipi*, I, for one, should not have believed him; nor, to speak with absolute candour, shall I believe any one who may tell me that he believes the Berkleian doctrine. Thus we get rid of many speculators.

Or look at the matter from the moral point of view. Supposing that he had seen a thief stealing a gammon of bacon, is anybody green enough to suppose that Berkeley would have regarded his own personal perception of the theft as the thief!—that the *esse* of the theft was merely *percipi*! If he had been bold enough to appear in a witness-box with this kind of doctrine in his mouth, what would any sane judge have said to him? It is amazing that such crazy notions should ever have imposed upon anybody. How, by a mere “idea” of the business, was poor Berkeley even to get his porridge boiled?

The theory of “consistent illusion,” untenable.—There is no corner in which the idealist can successfully conceal his absurdity. Even if we grant to him the right of

assuming the benefit of "consistent illusion" in favour of his theory, that assumption must, *eo ipso*, possess *all the characteristics of reality* in order to make the illusion consistent, and consequently can never be shown to be illusive or other than real. Indeed, that which possesses all the characteristics of reality cannot be anything but reality itself. Thus if your illusive dinner answers all the purposes of a real dinner without the possibility of detecting any illusion about it, wherein does it differ from a real dinner? If your illusive boots are as good as any real boots without the possibility of detecting any illusion about them, wherein are they inferior to any real boots? If your illusive dinner is as good as my real dinner, wherein have I the better of you? So that the very talk about "consistent illusion" is a mere rattle of nonsense.

The same with the theories of sceptics and nihilists.—Likewise against sceptics and nihilists of all kinds and degrees, the law of consciousness is, as a matter of fact, invincible and invulnerable. Some of the sceptics say that there is neither mind nor matter, or at least, that it is very doubtful as to whether there is either mind or matter. Scepticism is "the principle of a technical and scientific ignorance which undermines the foundation of all knowledge, in order, if possible, to destroy our belief and confidence therein."¹ Take Hume on the subject. The unlearned, he admits, believe through their senses in the actual existence of an outer world; but he goes on to say that "this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy which teaches us than nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets through which their images are conveyed without being able to introduce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object."² We possess no certainty, he

¹ Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 265 (Meiklejohn's tr.).

² *Essays Moral, Political, etc. : Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect.

apparently holds, that there is either matter or mind in the Universe; holds that there is, in short, nothing but "impressions" and "ideas." What we call a body is only a bundle of sensations; and what we call a mind is only a bundle of thoughts, passions and emotions without any subject. Now the great sceptic's doctrine herein set forth—both as to the internal and external worlds, is immediately contradicted by the unlearned and everyday person, who, even after he has imbibed some philosophy, still feels convinced in consciousness (1) that he is he; (2) that a brick wall is not he; and with loyal and devoted regard to the veracity of consciousness, he carefully refrains from running his head against the brick wall. And in the next place, the great sceptic's doctrine, touching both subject and object, is immediately contradicted by the great sceptic himself; who, with no less devoted and loyal regard to his own consciousness than his less learned brother, carefully refrains on his part also from running his own head against the brick wall, whose very existence he pretends "philosophically," to despise and deny. How arises so amazing a discrepancy between his theory and his practice? Very easily, indeed. Our sceptic's own consciousness is much stronger than his doctrine. His own consciousness,—his only possible criterion of truth, does not believe his own doctrine. His own consciousness is fact;

xii. pt. i. vol. ii. pp. 124-5 (Green and Grose's ed.). And Kant is no whit more hopeful in his theory. "I understand by idea," he says, "a necessary conception of reason to which no corresponding object can be discovered in the world of sense." *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 228. "All objects of a possible experience are nothing but phenomena, and . . . have no self-subsistent existence apart from human thought." *Ib.* p. 307. "Phenomena are nothing apart from our representations." *Ib.* p. 316. "Phenomenal substance is not an absolute subject." *Ib.* p. 326. But he seems to believe in the existence of substantial objects—noumena, solely cogitated, he says, "through the pure understanding." *Ib.* pp. 186-7. "We always find ourselves compelled to place in thought a transcendental object at the basis of phenomena, although we can never know what this object is in itself." *Ib.* p. 334.

his theory is mere fiction. He is at war with the primary postulate of all science—the veracity of consciousness: without which, science is an impossibility; thought, an absurdity.

Their sceptical speculations are a perpetual stultiloquy.—Hume was not acute enough to see that his scepticism was self-contradictory and suicidal; that his metaphysical doubts were resolvable into metaphysical presuppositions and beliefs. If all idealists, sceptics and nihilists were to combine and form themselves into a large dubitational Club, it could only be done on the presupposed basis of a Common Sense and an implied veracity of consciousness. It is the mind, obviously, that tells us anything we know either affirmatively or negatively, and yet all the sceptics are absurd enough to call the validity of the information in question! Their works are a perpetual stultiloquy.

If you wish to navigate the ocean successfully, you must consent to do so on accepted and fixed principles. If you wish to explore the human mind successfully, you must do so with reference to first and fixed principles. Failing to notice the exigency of this law,—all the metaphysical sceptics lose themselves in a welter of irrational dubitations. “They wander in a wilderness where there is no way; they grope in the darkness without light; they stagger like drunken men.”

Hume's confession.—Hume frankly expresses the opinion that Nature says one thing but Philosophy another!¹—which, being rationally interpreted, would mean that whilst Nature requires us to believe in, and make use of, our natural legs, Philosophy requires that we shall go

¹ “Nature is obstinate and will not quit the field however strongly attacked by Reason,” etc. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. i. p. 502. This blind blunder of setting up Reason against Nature, he frequently repeats, e.g. *Ib.* pp. 532, 535, 546, 547. Also in the *Essays Moral, Political*, etc., vol. ii. p. 36. The fact is that Hume was utterly muddled by the confusions and fatuities of his speculative predecessors. As Dugald Stewart notes—“In mathematics an absurd or inconsistent conclusion is admitted as

to the artificial leg-maker and supply ourselves with timber ones; that though Nature requires us to believe in and make use of our natural eyes, Philosophy demands that we shall put out these and make use of glass ones; that though Nature furnishes us with good hens' eggs, Philosophy insists upon us providing ourselves with those of the chalk or earthenware variety. He actually pitches Nature and Philosophy into hostile camps! Now, I submit that no Humist, no anti-Common-Sense man is worth speaking to until he sees the fatuity of such an opposition. Surely, Philosophy is nothing if it be not an interpretation of Nature. Nature, which of course, includes Mind, is, I submit, and necessarily must be, the final witness for all fact, for all principle. Any alternative supposition is not only false, but, to us, unthinkable. Science itself is nothing more and cannot be any more, than a knowledge of things and of their relation to each other as we find them in Nature at large. We cannot start thinking but on the basis of something Given—namely, Nature herself. If the Foundations be destroyed, what can anybody do? Anybody? Even the most skilful jugglery is but a manipulation of the resources of Nature.

No Sceptic is actually a Sceptic.—The logical penalty of universal doubt would be universal imbecility. No professed sceptic is actually a sceptic. His professed scepticism merely shows that he has the inclination to be a sceptic,

a demonstrative proof of a faulty hypothesis. But in those inquiries which relate to the principles of human nature, the absurdities and inconsistencies to which we are led by almost all the systems hitherto proposed, instead of suggesting corrections and improvements on these systems, have too frequently had the effect of producing scepticism with respect to all of them alike. How melancholy is the confession of Hume! 'The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another.' Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 13. All philosophers who refuse to accept in their integrity the facts and principles furnished to us by Common Sense, would be properly regarded as metaphysical derelicts—victims of "heated brain."

whilst his conduct shows much more emphatically that, as a matter of fact, he is utterly *unable* to be one. The Humist, or Illusionist of any complexion whatever, should soberly and discreetly ply himself with the question—What further evidence would he really and truly like to possess to give him complete assurance and satisfaction as to the existence of the external world? On what single point does the world really fail to convince the would-be sceptic as to its objective validity? In what way or ways would he like the external world to be rendered more actual to him than it already is? What further evidence would he like to possess as to the existence of his boots? Would he like fire to give him more heat, or frost, more cold? Would he like to feel the ground more distinctly, when he stumps along on Mother Earth? Would he like to feel that his arm-chair is a greater reality than it actually is? Isn't his mantelpiece hard enough when he happens to knock his head against it? Does he want his porridge to be made twenty times thicker? Would he like the various liquors which he consumes, to quench his thirst more authentically? Is not the Strand of London sufficiently convincing for a street? Would he require more certainty even in the streets of any Celestial City? If about to be hanged, doesn't he think the ordinary apparatus sufficiently real? Can he suggest anything more convincing than the ordinary executioner's methods? If he would ply himself with such questions as these . . . ! In short, there is no sceptic, never was a sceptic and never shall be one—excepting only those more or less self-baiting and muddle-headed persons who pretend to be sceptics. What is wanted of the sceptic and of the Illusionist generally, is that he shall observe more accurately and think more clearly and cultivate a keener liking for veracity than he has hitherto shown. By these means, any sceptic will easily get rid of his scepticism.

Universal Denial or Doubt is impossible.—Universal

Doubt or Denial is unthinkable—impossible in thought; for the denial or the doubt implies not only the existence of one who denies or doubts, but presupposes the fact that in denying and doubting, he assumes, and cannot but assume, that he is possessed of a criterion of truth or certainty, and of falsehood and uncertainty. The sceptic or the nihilist, like any ordinary person, is constitutionally as impotent to deny or doubt universally, as he is to gobble up his own body universally. Even as the clown who is ambitious to stand on his head corporeally, is under the necessity of taking the ground as his basis of operations, so, analogically, the philosopher who is desirous of turning his intellect upside down, is still compelled to presuppose consciousness as the basis of that droll *bouleversement*.

Another Humistic blunder.—Again, Hume, like so many other metaphysical jokers, blindly failed to observe the indubitable existence, the amazing, underlying presence of that insuppressible, self-assertive human ego, by which, alone, even his “impressions” and “ideas” could be unified and correlated into an intellectual consistency.¹ In a word, he blindly failed to recognise the fundamental factor in all rational computation—namely, the ego.

For about a twelvemonth, Hume was the custodian of a young insane nobleman, the Marquis of Annandale. During that period this young, insane nobleman’s head was not tenanted by wilder notions than were present in the fundamental assumptions of Hume’s “philosophic”

¹ “What we call a mind,” says he, “is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with perfect simplicity and identity.” “Nothing appears requisite to support the existence of a perception.” *Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. i. pp. 495, 518. He should have seen at a glance that a perception is an intellectual operation implying an operating and unifying ego, or personality, or intelligence. You can no more walk without legs, or smile without a face, than you can perceive without a mind. And later, he himself speaks of “that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions and sensations we are intimately conscious.” Vol. ii. p. 121.

theories. Apart from such theories, Hume was a very sensible and able man.¹

All Monistic theories untenable.—All the monistic theories are as much at war with Common Sense as those of the ordinary idealists and sceptics. It is beyond human ingenuity to unify I, thou and "he, she or it," into an organic whole. Such a unification is inconceivable, unimaginable, in any time or place. The right eye of the man who supposes the possibility of such a consummation must, in the language of the Hebrew bard, have been "utterly darkened." Even if it were given us to eat of the

¹ Of course, I am quite aware of the services supposed to have been rendered by Hume, both directly and indirectly, to the Cause of Philosophy. As Reid says—"A system of consequences, however absurd, acutely and justly drawn from a few principles in very abstract matters, is of real utility in science, and may be made subservient to real knowledge. This merit Mr. Hume's metaphysical writings have in a high degree." P. 293. It is also to be remembered that "the history of error shortens the road to truth." Sir J. Reynolds: *Discourses*, ii. Indeed it might be that the writings of Hume made an epoch in the Study of Mind. In Sir W. Hamilton's opinion, he gave the philosophy of Europe a new impulse and direction. Men had fallen asleep over their dogmatic systems; it was necessary to arouse thought from its lethargy. Sir William believed that the "dilemma of Hume" constituted, probably, the most memorable crisis in the history of philosophy—giving rise to the systems of Reid and Kant (v. *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 394-5). Yet it must be for ever regretted that he did not, apparently, detect the false premises of his predecessors—a task splendidly accomplished by Reid, but merely drew consequences from them which, though perfectly logical, were intrinsically absurd; and then made use of these derivative absurdities as tools wherewith to undermine the whole fabric of knowledge. Herein he himself was as much guilty of absurdity as his predecessors; for it does seem to be the very rankest of absurdity and self-stultification when a man professing to have no measure of things, offers himself as a critic of those who claim to possess a measure. As no man can lift anything, or even stand, without standing upon something, so, no one can speak intelligently but from an implied basis of intelligence. Until professed thinkers realise this truth, they had better abjure philosophy and grow cabbages or something innocuous; otherwise they are likely to become considerable nuisances to their fellow-men. On the whole, we must regard the story of "philosophers"—so-called, and their philosophy, as forming one of the most dreary and yawn-compelling chapters in the history of human fatuity. They form one of the prosiest squadrons of phantoms to be found in the united congregation of the dead.

Tree of Life, we cannot conceive the possibility of our nature ceasing to be dualistic.

All idealistic theories eternally self-destructive. — Not only do idealistic theories deny knowledge of the present external world, but they also, by implication, exclude the possibility that we can ever know anything external, with certainty. In short the idealist unwittingly imposes upon himself an eternal disability of attaining knowledge,—leaves not to himself the possibility of a spar or a twig to sit upon; so that his theory is self-destructive, not only for the present but for all time coming.

The Illusionist cannot act in consistency with his theory. —None of the Illusionists find it possible to act in consistency with their theories. They are *vox et præterea nihil*. Berkeley and Hume, and all the company of Idealists and Pyrrhonians, immediately and without any parley whatever, speed away from a bad drain as disgustedly as Reid and Stewart and the man of Common Sense. The Illusionists of all schools should remember the great saying that "Faith without works is dead being alone," and apply it to Philosophy as well as to Religion. They may rest assured that refuge from Common Sense is neither to be found in materialism, nor idealism, nor scepticism, nor nihilism. They cannot by any possible means, convince themselves that *esse* is merely *percipi*. Despite their theories, the malodorous particles will fly into the Idealistic, Pyrrhonian or Nihilistic Nose exactly as they fly into the nostrils of the man of Common Sense—producing effects, including the determination to run, which cannot safely be disputed. The whip-stroke firmly laid upon their bare shoulders is as real and indisputable to them as it is to the horse and the ass when it is applied to the backs of those admirable quadrupeds. Indeed it may be laid down as a law that the greater the amount of consistency which the Illusionist might try to establish between his practice and his theory,

the more ridiculous would he become—to the extent of throwing him into the hands of the lunatic authorities, or even of being the death of him. Indeed, if any Illusionist tried to carry his theory into practice, he would inevitably be collared by the police the moment he made public manifestation of his consistency, and carted off to a lunatic asylum. This one consideration should destroy the Illusionist speculation in all its branches. But as already hinted, it may be surmised that there has never been a convinced Sceptic, nor a convinced Idealist, nor a convinced Materialist since the world began.

Realist theory always admits of being consistent with practice.—But now notice the position of the man of Common Sense and contrast it with that of the Illusionist. With the latter, the law is—*the more consistent, the more absurd*; whereas with the former, the man of Common Sense, the law is that *the more consistency he can establish between his practice and his theory, the more sane and beautiful and illustrious does he become*. This one consideration should be sufficient, even by itself, to induce all philosophers to accept the doctrines of Common Sense with eagerness and alacrity.

Mr. John Stuart Mill's attempt to break away from Realism.—Mr. John Stuart Mill attempts to wax merry over the *argumentum baculinum* at the expense of Reid and Stewart, and says that “Hamilton, a far subtler thinker than any of these, never reasons in this manner . . . never supposes that a disbeliever in what he means by matter ought, in consistency, to act in any different mode from those who believe in it.”¹ Great was Mr. Mill's naïveté. He insisted on wearing actual boots and at the same time claimed a right to deny their existence!

¹ *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 234. Sir W. Hamilton, unhappily, sometimes permitted himself to get befogged amidst unwarrantable subtleties—through trying to know beyond human powers. See, e.g., his *Reid*, note. p. 184.

Controversialists of that kind are not worth talking to. Surely a theory can have no validity that would be the very death of the man who tried to reduce it to practice ; or which he would never venture to put into practice. Let him try the Institute of Civil Engineers with such a theory ! Nor do these foolish deniers seem to be entitled to receive credit for candour any more than for perspicacity. Most undubitably, I should suppose that Berkeley and Hume and Mill believed as firmly in the actual, external existence of their boots as I do in mine, and *not* that they were mere "impressions," or "ideas," or "permanent possibilities of sensation" of boots—phrases and words which amount to the merest metaphysical hocus-pocus. Nobody, moreover, as we have already insisted, will find it possible even to think of his boots as capable of acquiring a more intense reality than they already possess. Or would any Mr. John Stuart Mill "rocked in the cradle of the Deep" and suffering from *Mal-de-Mer* like to have his agonies made a little more real ? Would such gentlemen like to see a cock devouring gooseberries with more than normal avidity ? What further evidence would the sceptic like to possess as to the existence of the outer world ? What evidence can be more assertive and absolute than that furnished to us by our whole cognitive apparatus ?

I once knew a madman who took himself to be the Holy Ghost, but if you could wile his fancies away from that subject, he became comparatively sensible. So it is with all the Illusionist Schools of Philosophy and Theology. Wile away any member of such schools from hugging his Illusionist fancies and figments ; cunningly induce him to forget his particular theory for a moment, and in all probability you will find that he is quite disposed to be sensible and to take a walk with you in the paths of Common Sense, to your mutual satisfaction. In so far as a man fails to apprehend the Sovereignty of the Common Sense, he fails to understand the Alphabet of Science.

There can be no rational departure from the paths of Common Sense.—From the Commandments and Statutes and Judgments of Common Sense, we can in no wise depart without becoming fools for our pains. Let all philosophers firmly impress this great Law upon their minds. If, in the past, they had done so, it would have delivered the world from a deadly jungle of tangled systems and foolish books. It is by the Sacred Light of Common Sense alone, that mankind may hope to be delivered out of the Land of Egypt, out of the Intellectual and Spiritual House of Bondage. It is through the Common Sense alone that we may hope to see Philosophy and Theology finally freed from the crushing incubus of foolish theories.¹

Thus against all kinds of assaults, Consciousness, when accepted and interpreted in its integrity, remains to us invincible and invulnerable; the necessary basis of our life; the warranty and, as far as it is goes, the measure of truth. In all times and in all possible circumstances, Consciousness, in its fulness, must be accepted as true; nor will it be found possible to make any self-consistent attempt even to impugn its veracity.

¹ See how Hume admired common sense when delivered from the exigencies of his theories. Speaking, for example, of Gregory ix. and the forged decretals, and noting that the religion, philosophy and literature of his time was all false, he goes on to remark that people had, therefore, nothing wherewith to defend themselves but "some small remains of Common Sense, which passed for profanity and impiety." *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 229. This was in his best caustic vein.

CHAPTER IV

MIND AND MATTER APPEAR TO BE MUTUALLY INCOMMENSURABLE

AN observer can scarcely fail to notice the striking dissimilarity that exists between the manifestations and laws of what we call Mind and the manifestations and laws of what we call Matter. They are apparently wholly disparate and heterogeneous; and being so, they seem clearly to indicate that Mind and Matter themselves are, in their nature, wholly unlike—wholly incommensurable with each other.

Aristotle's proof.—Of course, this has long been noticed. "Nothing bodily," says Aristotle, "can, at the same time, in the same part, receive contraries. The finger cannot at once be wholly participant of white and of black; nor can it, at once and in the same place, be both hot and cold. But the sense at the same moment apprehends contraries. Wherefore it knows that this is first and that, second, and that it discriminates the black from the white. In what manner does sight simultaneously receive contraries? Does it do so by the same? Or does it by one part apprehend black, by another, white? If it does so by the same, it must apprehend these mutual parts, and it is incorporeal. But if by one part it apprehends this quality, and by another, that,—this is the same as if I perceived this, and you, that. But it is necessary that that which judges should be one and the same, and that it should even apprehend by the same, the objects which

are judged. Body cannot at the same moment and by the same part apply itself to contraries or things absolutely different. But sense at once applies itself to black and to white; it therefore applies itself indivisibly. It is thus shown to be incorporeal. For if by one part it apprehended white, by another part apprehended black, it could not discern the one colour from the other.”¹ So, Kant:—“I can apprehend the variety of my representations in one consciousness . . . otherwise, I must have as many-coloured and various a self as are the representations of which I am conscious.”²

Inadequacy of Matter to account for Mental Manifestations.—If Mind were Matter,—i.e. something possessing length, breadth and thickness; something solid, divisible and so forth; how on earth would it, as such, be able to comprehend the solar system? In the name of possibility, how are the Sun and the Moon and the stars to roll about in the human head (if it be a mere block) at the right distances from one another? How are they to be placed, how are they to be spaced, within the few cubic inches of human brain? In space they require billions and billions of cubic miles in which to perform their revolutions. Yet does our little human mind, great in its littleness, *intellectually* embrace glorious parts of the Divine Macrocosm. Ingeniously, also, and reverently can it trace and calculate, to some extent, the movements thereof. This mental something is, evidently, a something wholly different from the material something.

Sir John Davies on this subject.—I find that Sir John Davies, a writer not half well enough known, has followed

¹ Quoted by Sir W. Hamilton from Philoponus, paraphrasing Aristotle (*De Anima*, Bk. iii. c. ii. s. 11): *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 250-1.

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 83. It is singular to hear that “the Fathers with, perhaps, the single exception of Augustine,” taught “the corporeity of the thinking substance.” Hallam, *Introduction*, vol. iii. p. 242. If this was so, it showed but little perspicacity on the part of the Fathers.

this track of thought. Mind, he admirably argues, cannot be a body.—

“Were she a body, how could she remain
Within this body which is less than she?
Or how could she the world’s great shape contain,
And in our narrow breasts containèd be?

All bodies are confined within some place,
But she all place within herself confines;
All bodies have their measure and their space;
But who can draw the soul’s dimensive lines?

No body can at once two forms admit,
Except the one the other do deface;
But in the soul ten thousand forms do sit,
And none intrudes into her neighbour’s place.

All bodies are with other bodies filled,
But she receives both Heaven and Earth together;
Nor are their forms by rash encounter spilled,
For there they stand and neither toucheth other.

Nor can her wide embracements fillèd be,
For they that most and greatest things embrace,
Enlarge thereby their mind’s capacity
As streams enlarged, enlarge the channel’s space.

All things received do such proportion take
As those things have wherein they are received;
So, little glasses little faces make,
And narrow webs on narrow frames be weaved.

Then what vast body must we make the mind
Wherein are men, beasts, trees, towns, seas and lands;
And yet each thing a proper place doth find,
And each thing in the true proportion stands.”¹

But why talk of the Macrocosm in relation to the Mind? If Mind is mere matter, in the ordinary sense of the word, how is it to embrace a tea-kettle! By the human head, even a tea-kettle can only be intellectually apprehended.

¹ “Of the Soule of Man,” *Poetical Works*, vol. i. pp. 42–3.

Love, hate, joy, grief,—of what length, breadth or thickness are they? Or can they be thought of in terms of magnetic currents or electrical voltage, or anything of that sort? I think not. It seems as if they could only be intellectually or spiritually apprehended.

Volition,—how can that be mixed up with material properties?

Honour, Religion,—are they long, broad, thick, solid or liquid, or gases of some kind? Are they resolvable into magnetic or electrical discharges from some kind of battery? Gibberish! The materialist seems to be quite fond of darkness and the shadow of death. It would give me great pleasure to destroy his altars and break down his images and cut down his groves.

“Honest man” does not mean a long, broad or thick, or a red, green or yellow man! The concept cannot be expressed at all, except figuratively, in the language applicable to material things; nor can its opposite. A red man is conceivable as to his body only, not as to his thinking apparatus. “A righteous, godly and sober life,” cannot be thought of at all, in the language of physics; it can only be intellectually or spiritually apprehended. Honour and Religion exist inasmuch as, in their majesty, they can, on occasion, throw defiance in the teeth of all the blind powers, however crushing they may be. The materialist lantern is a mere aid to darkness.

Mr. Mallock truly says that “if there is nothing in mind and consciousness which was not previously in matter, matter must contain, potentially, everything that is in mind and consciousness. Accordingly, in proportion to the completeness with which we assent to the doctrine that the mind is material, it will become evident that conversely, matter must itself be mental. If mind be organised matter, matter must be unorganised mind.”¹ But the hypothesis of their unity explains nothing, and

¹ *Contemporary Review*, July 1905.

the incommensurable nature of their qualities renders it unwarrantable.

An endless marvel, indeed, is the human mind :—

“She bringeth heat and cold, and moist and dry,
And life and death, and peace and war together ;
Ten thousand fighting things in her do lie,
Yet neither troubleth nor disturbeth either.”¹

In a word, mental and material properties and manifestations are so completely heterogeneous and incommensurable with each other, that it seems utterly impossible for them to be of the same nature. We utterly fail to find any common footing between them without stultifying ourselves and arriving at ridiculous conclusions. To confound Mind with Matter, brings Chaos back again.

If inquirers from the beginning had been contented, as they should have been, to accept the simple and inexpugnable facts and laws presented to them in Nature—however inscrutable they be, as the only possible basis and material of knowledge, it would have saved the world from a whole wilderness of vain psychological and metaphysical speculations, and splendidly helped to promote the sanity of mankind.

¹ Sir John Davies : “Of the Soule of Man,” p. 97.

CHAPTER V.

WE MUST OBSERVE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE

Common Sense : what it is.—A common-sense doctrine is one concerning which all men are agreed either explicitly or implicitly. All men are implicitly agreed that there is a sense of things common to all men—a Universal Reason. Even Hume admits this truth when forgetful of the demands of his sceptical theories, and speaks of “the essential and universal properties of human nature.”¹ The phrase “common sense” is the spontaneous expression of the general conviction of mankind that there is a perception of facts and principles which is common to all men—that there is a reference to universal principles implied in all discourse. It might also be well rendered as the Universal or Catholic Sense, embracing that sum of principles which every man believes as far as his understanding carries him, in spite of any efforts he may make to believe something contrary. It is the presupposed, natural basis of the verdict of Smith and Brown touching any problem which they may discuss. In this position also, David Hume is with us. “The faculties of the mind are supposed to be naturally alike in every individual; otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than to reason or dispute together.”² Every sane man who addresses his fellow-men, implicitly, at least, assumes the existence of

¹ *The Natural History of Religion*, Sect. xiv. p. 361 (Green and Grose's ed.)

² *Essays*, etc. : *Concerning Human Understanding*, vol. ii. p. 66.

such common sense, such Universal Reason. No sound science, *i.e.* no science at all, either secular or sacred, can be built but upon this ground. It is universally allowed that nothing is more provocative—perhaps nothing so provocative of vituperative language as breach of Common Sense. Hume and all the satirists continually invite us to scorn and laugh at those whom they satirise because of the ridiculous opposition which they manifest to the plain dictates of Common Sense. The common target of the satirist is the man who breaks away from Common Sense. If a would-be satirist venture to attack Common Sense, his effort invariably recoils upon himself.

We must guard against the mendacity of witnesses.—Of course it is to be understood that the verdict of Smith and Brown is not the verdict of their ignorance, nor of their prejudices, nor of their passions, nor of their schools, colleges, and churches, but in very deed, the sacred “May-God-Help-me” verdict of their intelligence after it has been consulted to the very best of their ability. Unhappily the verdicts which many philosophers give us, are those of their passions or their ignorance, of their schools, colleges, or churches: hence the Babel din in the Temple of Philosophy.

The opponents of Common Sense are, properly speaking, infidels.—It should also be noted that every man in so far as he distrusts the Common Sense, should be regarded as a sceptic. All anti-Common-Sense schemes of philosophy and theology are, substantially, schemes of scepticism and infidelity. Thus, even all orthodox persons—distrusting and betraying the very faculties which their Maker has given them, must be regarded as sceptics and infidels.

They are at war with the Obvious.—The opponents of Common Sense are engaged in a ghastly polemic against the obvious,—a proceeding which they seem to regard as

quite legitimate and, indeed, rather philosophic and impressive. They could not make a greater blunder. It should be clearly understood by all who are not labouring under mental disability of some sort, that it is not philosophic at all, but strictly and heinously idiotic to quarrel with the obvious—which all the opponents of Common Sense are continually doing, except, of course, when they forget the exigencies of their theories, and kindly Nature hustles them back into the ways of Common Sense. What is particularly required in the interests of philosophy and life is that all such theories should be thrown into the Rubbish-Shoot of Existence as promptly as possible, just as any engineering scheme which proposed to disregard the law of gravitation and build a castle in the clouds, would immediately be thrown into that great Rubbish-Shoot. A meeting of anti-Common-Sense philosophers met to determine their position on anti-Common-Sense principles, could only resolve itself into a council of phrenetics. However articulate their talk might be, it could only result in an irrational gurry-worry.

The distinction between the finite and the infinite. Four relationships in which the Universe stands to the finite mind.—Bearing these Common-Sense principles in mind, let us now go on to observe that we are face to face with things infinite as well as finite; that man is merely a finite intelligence; and that being merely finite, his knowledge of the universe of Mind and Matter must necessarily be limited by his finitude. Under this limitation he will find that the Universe and its contents may be said to stand to him in one or other of four relationships, namely, (1) as known, or within the touch or grip of consciousness; (2) as knowable, or reducible within the touch or grip of consciousness; (3) as unknowable through inaccessibility of adequate data or evidence; (4) as absolutely unknowable, or mysterious, under the limitations of our finite faculties.

(A) THE KNOWN

In the first place, we find ourselves face to face with what I will be bold enough to call the Known. It is a highly important thing, as I have already had occasion to remark, to know our own ignorance—to know that we don't know. It is no less important *to know that we actually do know*. As an admirable Chinese philosopher expresses it: "A knowledge of our own ignorance is a proof of superiority, but ignorance of our knowledge is nothing less than a mental malady, which like all other maladies will be best escaped by those who have a dread of the sufferings it will give rise to."¹ So, Herbert Spencer: "Which is the more misleading, belief without evidence, or refusal to believe in presence of overwhelming evidence? If there is an irrational faith which persists without facts to support it, there is an irrational lack of faith which persists spite of the accumulation of facts which should produce it; and we may doubt whether the last does not lead to worse results than the first."² All the opponents of Common Sense should lay these wise words to heart. My contentions as to *The Known* would be quite banal unless they were denied and impugned; but they are denied and impugned, by implication at least, under various schemes of philosophy: therefore the necessity of affirming them. The intelligent student of the history of philosophy will scarcely fail to perceive that a very large number of philosophers have tragically, yet ridiculously, grown crazy through the ravages of this scurviest of all maladies—ignorance of, and opposition to, their own knowledge.

1. *The Known in Zoology*.—Just let us think what a considerable amount of actual and useful knowledge we possess in zoology. What a quantity of books exist on

¹ Lao-Tsze: *The Tao-Tih-King*, c. lxxi.

² *Principles of Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 247.

that subject! What a deal of information—information which seems absolutely reliable, exists in those books and elsewhere. For example, there is beyond question, an almost infinite variety of animals. There are land, water and aerial animals. There are amphibia,—animals which haunt both land and water, such as frogs, lizards, serpents, crocodiles, turtles, salamanders, hippopotami, etc. Not only so, but there is a third kind of animals which the naturalists don't seem to have named or differentiated (if so, I am ignorant of the fact), to wit, what we might call the tribia: animals which inhabit not only land and water, but the aerial regions as well, *e.g.* the wild duck. That animal waddles about successfully on land; swims, obviously, with great ease, on water; and betakes itself to the aerial regions on fitting occasions with grace, power, and whistling velocity. We have seen all these bodily movements of the wild duck with our own eyes, and admired the facilities of locomotion possessed by that fowl. Indeed, a large number of fowls might be regarded as tribia. There is really no doubt about it.

Naturalists divide the animal kingdom into orders, tribes, genera, species, etc.,—a perfectly reasonable and proper proceeding, the outcome of knowledge.

Amongst land animals, they distinguish quite correctly between the two-footed and the four-footed, and arrange them accordingly. Amongst these, again, there are numerous divisions and subdivisions,—feathered and unfeathered; smooth and hairy; carnivorous and graminivorous; hard-billed and soft-billed, etc. They range in size, also, from elephants down to microbes. Nor do we only know of the existence of these beasts: we actually preserve flies and stuff elephants.

Amongst water animals again, there is an almost boundless variety—ranging from whales down to infusoria—which you may drink without knowing it. All this we know.

The Historic Continuity of Species.—We know that a

purely aquatic animal has never been observed to change itself, or to get changed, into a purely land animal; and that a purely land animal has never been known to get changed into a purely aquatic animal; nor either the one or the other into an aërial animal; nor an aërial animal into either the one or the other. All these are natural historic facts beyond question, I suppose. It seems ridiculous, but in view of the eccentricities of the dubitational philosophers, it is almost necessary, to remark that a whale has never been known to swim up into the bright blue sky. In spite of the dubitationists, it is quite clear that we can be positive about something.

We know that, except in the case of monstrosities, perhaps, the offspring of human beings are always human beings; of horses, horses; of oxen, oxen; of wasps, wasps; of bees, bees; and so on through the whole range of the animal kingdom. History and experience authenticate no case in which a mare produced a calf; or a cow, a foal; or any animal, any other animal. The order of descent as stated, is constant; uncontradicted by experience or authentic history. Feathers, indeed, in the course of generations may, it appears, get changed in colour. Skins and hair and fur are said to do the same both in quality and colour, according to variations in the life circumstances of the animals to which they belong.¹ Some animals may be strongly built; others of the same species, weakly; but in their general and essential framework, features and habits, species appear to be constant. Any contrary theory is purely hypothetical. Ransacking Nature from roof to cellar, I understand that sober science does not at present—whatever it may do in the future, carry us beyond this point, notwithstanding anything that conjectural spirits may say to the contrary.

¹ Heinrich Gätke writes:—"There can be no doubt that an alteration of colour and *renovation of worn parts of the feathers* takes place to a greater or less extent in the great majority of birds." *Heligoland as an Ornithological Observatory*, p. 163.

Again, we positively know that an ox does not eat lions, but that lions eat oxen when they have a chance. We know that deer do not hunt tigers, but tigers, deer. We know that cats hunt for mice, and that mice do not hunt cats; that greyhounds chase hares, not hares, greyhounds; that hawks pounce upon chickens, not chickens upon hawks. These life laws, as far as observation goes or history tells, are constant. As far as I can learn, the most determined agnostic, or sceptic, or evolutionist has no evidence of a conflicting nature to offer us.

Instinct.—We know that many animals have what are called instincts—marvellous powers by which they do marvellous things.¹ We know that certain dogs have powers or faculties by which they can trace or follow their masters, though they be not visible, through a desert, a forest, or a crowd; or scent out game however cunningly it may have hidden itself. We know that cats and other animals have similar faculties.

We know that many animals, more particularly those of the feathered species, take great care, and show what looks like great skill, in the building and furnishing of their dens and nests. But a very curious feature in connection with their skill and industry is that they seem to build and furnish their first den or nest without undergoing any apprenticeship whatever, just as well as the tenth; or, to put it conversely, they build and furnish the tenth no better, apparently,—no more deftly, than the first. I suppose it was these curious facts which gave rise to the old saying—*Deus est anima brutorum*. In this endowment of instinct, therefore, it appears that the individual animal largely differs from the individual man, who “inherits” very few intellectual “habits”; can do very little without long, individual education and training; and is helpless for the first part of his life, extending over many years.

¹ Bain defines instinct as “the *untaught* ability to perform actions of all kinds.” *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 256.

Apparent wide difference between Instinct and Intelligence.

—All the senses, both of man and the lower animals, seem to be transmitted intact from generation to generation. The intellectual faculties in man are also thus transmitted, organically intact, *but only in capability or potentiality*. Any *acquired* excellence of intellectual faculty scarcely appears to be transmissible. The son of a scholar, for example, seems to have quite as much difficulty in learning Greek, as the son of a peasant. Indeed the son of the peasant is sometimes found to be the more educable of the two. Each individual of any generation, who would attain intellectual excellence, or for whom it is desired that intellectual excellence should be attained, can only hope to achieve that end by his own strenuous efforts, combined with the assistance of competent teachers. This is clearly shown by the fact that educative effort has to be renewed in every branch of learning by every individual of every new generation of children. Not so apparently, with mere instincts. If we do not possess them, it seems as if they could not be planted in us by any teacher. They must be given by Nature and are transmissible. In short it is only Nature's original gifts which appear to be transmissible; and whilst it is observable that these original organs may be strengthened and improved by use, it has not been shown that any radical, organic change can be effected in the original organism, by any kind of educational or external stimulus.

A question for evolutionists.—Notice the great biological significance of the fact that though the intellectual, like the instinctive, faculties are furnished by Nature, it still requires enormous and long-continued effort to educate the former and make them greatly serviceable. Now as it takes such an amount of effort even to *educate* these existing faculties, how is it possible or even conceivable that external agencies or stimuli of any kind, will ever *create* such organs or faculties? I should feel greatly indebted to any evolu-

tionist who might explain this difficulty in the terms of his theory of heredity. Practice may improve, but it is a contradiction in terms to say that it may create, a faculty.

Instinct appears to be constant.—We know also that amongst wild animals, one generation seems to learn nothing from previous generations. The conies which had their houses in the rocks in the days of Solomon, and the sparrows which built their nests in the eaves, have not yet devised any architectural improvements, nor served us with quittance notices. We look for the burrows of the conies and the nests of the sparrows in the same kind of corners now as then. Not so, exactly with man. He to some extent,—though not nearly so much as he might and ought, treasures up the observations, experiences and achievements of his ancestors, and improves sometimes upon them; and even though there have been Solomons in the past, later men know some things and do some things which the ancient Solomons did not know and could not do. To express the same truth in another way, successive generations of men may and should improve upon earlier generations in knowledge and wisdom. Not so, evidently, with rabbits or ants. Instinct was as excellent, it appears, in the days of Solomon as in our time. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer or ruler, provides her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” Contrast such characteristics with those of acquired knowledge and art. Acquired knowledge and art have to be reacquired by, and taught to, every generation. With successive generations of men, knowledge and art may be increased or dissipated; with successive generations of the lower animals, instinct seems to remain practically constant. Instinct is the inheritance of a whole race; knowledge is, to a large extent, the acquisition of the individual. The evolutionists should consider how bees chased men as far back as the time of Moses (Deut. i. 44).

Further comparison between the endowments of man and those of the lower animals.—Another curious distinction between man and the lower animals is this—that all the individuals of each wild species, seem to be on the whole, equally accomplished. One bee builds its cell as competently, it would appear, as another bee; and granted equal materials for distillation, the honey of the one is as good as the honey of the other. One swallow builds as good a nest as another,—neither better nor worse; and their eggs have a remarkable resemblance to each other. We may submit the case for confirmation to the most enthusiastic doubter that can be found—even to the man who doubts that he had a grandmother. On the other hand, the individual members of the human race do not seem to be equally accomplished. In the matter of wisdom, they range from Moses as reported with the ineffable light of Sinai on his countenance, down to the demagogic platform-ranter or the American Tammany-man;—some, sublime as the Heavens; others as low as the Abyss. In the matter of knowledge and wisdom they range from Isaiah the Prophet, down to a ritualistic curate; whilst amongst the individual lower animals of the same wild species, all, it would appear, are equally endowed, or very nearly so.

Vast superiority of man in potentiality and in fact.—Again, law does not appear to enter into the thoughts—if they have any, of the lower animals. For example, the human race,—law-breakers though they frequently be, do think of duties to their neighbours, whilst the lower animals appear to have no more regard for the idea of duty than a fly has for a policeman. Men, also, it is well known, respect the dead, mourn over them, give them funerals, and build monuments to their memory. They also think of Gods and of duties to Gods. They venerate, worship and build temples to Gods. They hope—some of them, at least, to know more about the Gods, and, ultimately, to live immortally and in closer communion with

them. There is no evidence whatever, that rabbits or monkeys do these, or any one of these things ; no evidence that a rabbit or a monkey has any regard for law, or duty, or God at all. The same even with our tame animals. We do not anticipate the least possibility of our favourite dog or cat being haled before the magistrates—although we ourselves may be haled before the magistrates on their account. This is another very remarkable and unquestionable distinction between man and the lower animals.

Further, man in his normal state works intelligently—that is with an object in view ; for wages, for food and drink, house and clothing ; for duty, emulation, ambition ; for kindness, love and so on ; in short, with more or less reason, or prudence, or foresight, or circumspection. Not so, the lower animals. At all events, in the purlieus of farmyards and elsewhere, you will frequently see hens and ducks and geese sitting very seriously, in their stupidity, upon nothing.¹ The instincts of even the highest of the lower animals, we are assured by Mr. Darwin, “are often followed in a senseless or purposeless manner : the weaver-bird will perseveringly wind threads through the bars of a cage as if building a nest ; a squirrel will pat nuts on a wooden floor as if he had just buried them in the ground ; a beaver will cut up logs of wood and drag them about, although there is no water to dam up” ; etc. :²—just as if a bricklayer at sea, were to begin to build brick walls all over the ship ; or a sailor on land were to fit his house with keel and rudder, or rig it with masts and sails. In short, sane man possesses discourse of reason, more or less ; whilst

¹ Although for this *niaiserie*, we should not blame them too much, since it might be objected that many of our scientists, philosophers and theologians resemble hens and ducks and geese, in this respect. Like their feathered fellow-creatures you will frequently find them sitting and brooding for long periods upon what is practically “nothing.” Indeed it would appear to be the chief aim of the professional sceptic to sit upon “nothing” all his days, with an appearance of philosophic seriousness.

² *On Earthworms*, p. 95.

as to the lower animals—? We are under the positive necessity of placing a mark of interrogation against the subject. As an eminent man of science expresses it, “We have no reason up to the present time even to speak of the possession of psychical properties by the lowest animals; we find them only in the higher, and only with full certainty in the highest.”¹ So far, Professor Virchow. Thus we have no sufficient authority even to set down what appears to be ingenuity in animals, to the account of reasoning. “Growth, development, improvement, self-education, distinctly belong to intellect. It is also conversant with general notions. Instinct appears to be a fixed quantity—a power which does blindly and ignorantly the work of intelligence, and only knows individual objects.”²

Reid on Instinct.—On this subject I may quote a final passage from the *Essays* of one who was, perhaps, the sanest of all philosophers, namely Thomas Reid: “The manufactures of animals, if we may call them by that name, present us with a wonderful variety of instincts belonging to particular species, whether of the social or of the solitary kind; the nests of birds so similar in their situation and architecture in the same kind, so various in different kinds; the webs of spiders and of other spinning animals; the ball of the silkworm; the nest of ants and other mining animals; the combs of wasps, hornets and bees; the dams and houses of beavers.

“Every manufacturing art among men was invented by some man, improved by others, and brought to perfection by time and experience. Men learn to work in it by long practice, which produces a habit. The arts of men vary in every age and in every nation, and are found only in those who have been taught them. The manufactures of animals differ from those of men in many striking particulars.

¹ Virchow: *Science in the Modern State*, p. 55.

² T. Spencer Baynes: *Unpublished University Lectures*.

No animal of the species can claim the invention. No animal ever introduced any new improvements, or any variation from the former practice. Every one of the species has equal skill from the beginning, without teaching, without experience or habit. Every one has its art by a kind of inspiration. I do not mean that it is inspired with the principles or rules of the art, but with the ability or inclination of working in it to perfection, without any knowledge of its principles, rules, or end.

"The more sagacious animals may be taught to do many things which they do not by instinct. What they are taught to do, they do with more or less skill, according to their sagacity and their training. But in their own arts they need no teaching or training, nor is the art ever improved or lost. Bees gather their honey and their wax, they fabricate their combs and rear their young at this day neither better nor worse than they did when Virgil so sweetly sang their works.

"The work of every animal is indeed like the works of nature, perfect in its kind, and can bear the most critical examination of the mechanic or the mathematician. . . . Bees it is well known construct their combs with small cells on both sides fit both for holding their honey and for rearing their young. There are only three possible figures of the cells which can make them all equal and similar, without any useless interstices. These are the equilateral triangle, the square and the regular hexagon. It is well known to mathematicians that there is not a fourth way possible in which a plane shall be cut into little spaces that shall be equal, similar and regular, without leaving any interstices. Of the three the hexagon is the most proper both for convenience and strength. Bees, as if they knew this, make the cells regular hexagons.¹

"As the combs have cells on both sides, the cell may

¹ For the amazing economy of the hexagonal cell, see also M. Maeterlinck in *The Life of the Bee* (tr. by Alfred Sutro), p. 155.

either be exactly opposite, having partition against partition, or the bottom of a cell may rest on the partitions between the cells on the other side, which will serve as a buttress to strengthen it. The last way is best for strength; accordingly the bottom of each cell rests against the point where three partitions meet on the other side, which gives it all the strength possible." So with regard to economy of space and of material and labour, mathematicians have calculated that in the building of their marvellous cells, bees proceed upon the best principles of construction.¹

Physiologically, also, a great deal is actually known about animals—*e.g.* some of the functions of the heart, the lungs, the brain, the veins, the arteries, the blood, etc.; not vaguely known moreover, but in some respects pretty accurately known. Consider, for example, how absolutely the idealist even, is convinced of the necessity of taking an occasional meal to keep his body going—which, of course, renders all his idealistic protestations not merely futile but ridiculous. His theory cannot stand the strain of practice. He has no intention, even, of trying it by practice. As in morals so in metaphysics, we must simply regard a man whose practices do not agree, and cannot be made to square, with his professions, as crazy or dishonest. This is our answer to all who suppose that they have only to deny an intuition in order to confound the intuitionist—their own conduct immediately gives the lie to their denial. Even the hypothesis of "consistent illusion" which they sometimes try to set up, cannot avail them—that hypothesis being, as we have seen, self-destructive, inasmuch as *it necessarily postulates the existence of a real criterion of consistent illusiveness*: so that the author and exponents of this hypothesis do indeed, like all other illusionists, only involve themselves in absurdity and ineptitude. They are continually mistaking verbiage and jargon—the merest gibberish, for discourse of Reason.

¹ *Essays on the Active Powers*, iii. pt. i. c. ii., Hamilton's ed. pp. 545-6.

Much, likewise, is clearly known of the anatomy of animals. Pathologically, also, there is some knowledge to be had, accurate enough to afford a foundation for a science of medicine, both for man and for some of the lower animals.

2. *The Known in Botany.*—Again, there exists a large body of botanical knowledge. There is a fairly accurate classification of the vegetable kingdom into orders, classes, genera, species, etc., reliable and useful in many ways.

A great deal is known as to the habitat of various members of the vegetable kingdom. It is well known, for example, that the rose does not bloom amid eternal snows, and that the little Alpine flower, the edelweiss, does not flourish in torrid heat. It is well known that the vine does not flourish in northern latitudes, but that it requires a sunny, yet not torrid, climate, in which to justify its existence. All members of the botanic family have probably their favourite soil, temperature and exposure. In favourite circumstances they flourish; in less favourable circumstances they live; in very unfavourable circumstances they sicken and degenerate; in wholly unfavourable circumstances they die. All botanists, probably, will support these statements. Plant an English oak in an English park and it will probably flourish; plant it in the Orkney Islands and it will probably become a mere scrub; plant it in the Sahara Desert and it will speedily be reduced into a mere stick. *Ex uno disce omnes.* Probably the totality of the members of the Vegetable Kingdom are subject to laws of this nature.

Historic continuity of Botanical Species.—Again, each plant, as each animal, appears to remain constant to its kind. The oak-tree may change its growth and the quality of its timber according to the circumstances of soil, temperature and exposure in which it finds itself planted; but no authentic case can be produced of an oak-tree becoming a fir-tree; nor a fir-tree an oak; nor an ash a willow; nor

a willow an ash. Any kind of tree may become extinct ; but no kind of tree, apparently, has ever been seen to change itself into another kind of tree. Thus, speaking of some of the contents of the Danish peat-bogs, Lyell incidentally remarks —The “Scotch fir was afterwards supplanted by the sessile variety of the common oak, of which many prostrate trunks occur in the peat at higher levels than the pines ; and still higher the pedunculated variety of the same oak occurs with the elder, birch and hazel. The oak has now in its turn been almost superseded in Denmark by the common beech. Other trees, such as the white birch, characterise the lower part of the bogs and disappear from the higher ; while others again like the aspen, occur at all levels and still flourish in Denmark.”¹ How any hypothesis of organic evolution can be made to square with such facts, has never yet been explained to me. So with other products of the vegetable kingdom. The gooseberry bush will be found to produce good, medium or inferior gooseberries according to the soil, temperature, exposure and treatment which it receives ; but no authentic case can be produced of a gooseberry bush producing plums ; nor of a plum-tree producing gooseberries ; nor of an apple-tree producing pears ; nor of a pear-tree producing apples. (The process of grafting, of course, is not here to be thought of as having any bearing upon the subject.) So the potato may be found to change in its growth and quality according to the physical circumstances in which it is planted and the attention which is bestowed upon its cultivation ; but I venture to say that no authentic case can be produced in which the potato has been found to develop itself into a turnip or into anything else than a potato ; and so on through the whole vegetable kingdom. In a word, as far as human observation can go, botanical species, like animal species, appear to be, as a matter of historic and visible fact, fixed.

Again something is actually known of the anatomy and

¹ *Antiquity of Man*, p. 9.

physiology of plants; something also, of the diseases and pests to which they are subject, such as mildew, rust, mealy-bug, Colorado-beetle, greenfly, caterpillar and so forth. Certain remedies, more or less effective, are also known against these pests and diseases. I speak of known facts which each person may verify to his own satisfaction. Positively, all such knowledge may be regarded as positive.

3. *The Known in Chemistry.* — In Chemistry also, mankind are in possession of a great many well-known and useful facts. Up to this date, chemists have been able to make out about seventy elements. Even the idealist or the sceptic of any school would find it wholly unprofitable to call such facts in question even on the hypothesis of "consistent illusion."¹

Between certain of these elements, chemists have discovered various affinities which lead them to combine in various, constant proportions, resulting in various compounds; and on the other hand, they have discovered various repugnances between different elements which prevent them from so combining. Air, earth, water and everything organic or inorganic, except simple substances, have a chemical composition of some kind; the composition of a large number of them having been to some extent, at least, obtained and tabulated; and their uses to some extent discovered. Sulphuric Acid, for example, is, I understand, a first-rate compound for drains, but eminently bad for breakfast. Even Bishop Berkeley, with his eyes closed, would have admitted this.²

Of these facts there can be no rational doubt; and no man should permit himself to doubt irrationally. Every

¹ v. *supra*, p. 80.

² That is to say, he would have recognised at a glance that the mere *percepti* of sulphuric acid could do no harm to his inner man, but that the *esse* of that fierce liquid taken in sufficient quantity. . . ! At the same time, of course, he would have proceeded to sophisticate about the latter. See, e.g., his *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Works, vol. i. pp. 170-1.

man who opposes Reason, wrongs his own soul. The prime glory of a man lies in submitting himself to, and in being ruled by, Reason. Reason, as the ruler of conduct, invariably points to the supreme advantage. It can never lead us into hostility towards anything but the lower interests. It is the privilege of a rational man to possess, and not to be possessed by anything ; to hold thoughts as by personal conviction and not by external imposition ; whereas the irrational man is not really in possession of his thoughts at all, but is rather possessed by them as by so many devils, as when he professes to disbelieve, for example, in the existence of matter. Such a thought may possess a man, but no man can *rationaly* possess such a thought. He who does harbour such a thought belongs to the Don Quixotes of speculation. The poor man who attempts to build a house on anything else than the ground, is not in the least likely to possess a habitable abode.

4. *The Known in Physics.*—So, with regard to the forces of Nature, a great deal is actually known about them. Nobody, I suppose, cares to call in question the law or, at least, the fact of gravitation. Not only does it help to account for the splendid occurrences of sunrise and sunset, for the ebb and flow of the tides and for the fall of rain, but for the very flowing of water in our drains and gutters, and for many other things besides. Then we actually know something extremely important about what is called the specific gravities of bodies. Even an idealistic or sceptical mariner would know not to load his ship quite *full* of pig-iron—would, in fact, consider such a trick as anything but the achievement of a man of understanding. Further, we actually know that a cubic inch of iron is heavier than a cubic inch of deal board ; that a cubic inch of gold is heavier than a cubic inch of iron ; that a bushel of wheat is heavier than a bushel of bran ; that a gallon of water is heavier than a gallon of oil. And, indeed, there

is a large quantity of information existing on this subject about which sane persons have no doubt whatever. Suppose an engineer trying to build a bridge in defiance of the laws of gravitation! Yet, analogically, with the single exception of the sacred school of Common Sense, this is exactly what all the schools of philosophers have been laboriously trying to do for millenniums past—trying to philosophise in defiance of the Common Sense!

It is well known also that there are such forces in Nature as electricity, magnetism, galvanism—forces educible and controllable to some extent, by men who have studied them. If our sceptical friends are in doubt about this, let them take a seat in a galvanic chair and request the operator to turn on the current. No philosophy that defies Common Sense can ever justify its children, or permanently escape ridicule and destruction.

Light and Heat also have been much studied, and are to some extent known in their laws and operations. Let no one start any doubts as to whether the sun is shining or not.

Again, we all know what weather means. A most important matter it is too, terrestrially. It is much more important than gold mines,—although at first sight some may not recognise the fact. But if not at first sight, I think they will recognise it at second; for upon it depends—that is to say, it is an essential element in, all eating, drinking, clothing and, indeed, in their physical existence itself; so that in certain circumstances, a good rainfall might almost be valued by the drop, and excels many things in terrestrial importance. Perhaps this fact accounts, partly, for that other fact, namely, that the British people so frequently discuss the weather—even the sceptical portion of them: both those in a state of Pyrrhonian dubitation about the Universe and those who pretend to regard it as mere idea.

Again there is no doubt that there are such outbursts

as floods and droughts, storms and tempests, calamities on land and calamities at sea,—not mere phenomena, but *facts*, whatever Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Company may say to the contrary.

The idealist need not try to boil an egg in cold water nor attempt to fry a herring on a cold gridiron. I remember, of course, that the idealist whilst denying the existence of his boots yet demands permission to wear them, but we have already seen that he can only do so at the ruinous expense of divorcing his works from his faith, his practice from his profession. Nor, as I have already shown, is there any logical refuge for him in a theory of “consistent illusiveness”; so that, in his theory, he stands before us, I repeat, intellectually and morally bankrupt. He and his kind are as “clouds without water carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”

If it were declared by some absolute monarch that all the idealists in his dominions should forthwith renounce their faith or prove it by their works, or—failing one or other of these alternatives, “come awa an’ be drooned.” . . .! Or if the same absolute and earnest monarch were, with frowning brow, to demand from the Darwinian some little evidence that a fish was the ancestor of Adam . . .!

5. *The Known in Secondary Cause and Effect.*—Again, not only are mankind acquainted with an immense number of facts, of the actuality of which they have no doubt whatever, and cannot have any doubt, but they also find themselves thinking of what they call causes and effects, and, to some extent, knowing such causes and effects.

As to cause and effect in general, Sir William Hamilton makes the following excellent remarks:—“Things do not exist, events do not occur, isolated,—apart—by themselves; they exist, they occur and are by

us conceived, only in connection. One observation affords us no example of a phenomenon¹ which is not an effect; nay our thought cannot even realise to itself the possibility of a phenomenon without a cause. We do not at present inquire into the nature of the connections of effect and cause,—either in reality or in thought. It is sufficient for our present purpose to observe that while, by the constitution of our nature, we are unable to conceive anything to begin to be, without referring it to some cause,—still the knowledge of its particular cause is not involved in the knowledge of any particular effect. By this necessity which we are under of thinking some cause for every phenomenon; and by our original ignorance of what particular causes belong to what particular effects, it is rendered impossible for us to acquiesce in the mere knowledge of the fact of a phenomenon: on the contrary, we are determined, we are necessitated to regard each phenomenon as only partially known, until we discover the causes upon which it depends for its existence. For example, we are struck with the appearance in the Heavens called the rainbow. Think we cannot that this phenomenon has no cause, though we may be wholly ignorant of what the cause is. Now our knowledge of the phenomenon as a mere fact,—as a mere isolated effect,—does not content us. We therefore set about an inquiry into the cause, which the constitution of our mind compels us to suppose, and at length discover that the rainbow is the effect of the refraction of the solar rays by the watery particles of a cloud. Having ascertained the causes, but not till then, we are satisfied that we fully know the effect.”

Knowledge of Cause and Knowledge of Fact.—“Now that knowledge of the cause of a phenomenon is different from, is something more than, the knowledge of that

¹ It would have been proper here to have used the word *occurrence* rather than phenomenon. v. *supra*, p. 65.

phenomenon simply as a fact; and these two cognitions or knowledges have accordingly received different names. The latter is called *historical* or *empirical* knowledge; the former is called *philosophical*, or *scientific*, or *rational*, knowledge. Historical, is the knowledge that a thing is; philosophical, is the knowledge why or how it is. And as the Greek language, with peculiar felicity, expresses historical knowledge by the *ὅτι*—the *γνώσις ὅτι ἔστι*; so, it well expresses philosophical knowledge by the *διότι*—the *γνώσις διότι ἔστι* . . . To recapitulate what has now been stated:—there are two kinds or degrees of knowledge. The first is knowledge that a thing is—*ὅτι χρῆμα ἔστι*, *rem esse* . . . The second is the knowledge why or how a thing is, *διότι χρῆμα ἔστι*, *cur res sit* . . .

“Philosophic knowledge in the widest acceptation of the term, and as synonymous with science, is thus the knowledge of effects as dependent on their causes. Now, what does this imply? In the first place, as every cause to which we can ascend is itself also an effect, it follows that it is the aim of philosophy to trace up the series of effects and causes, until we arrive at causes which are not also themselves effects. These first causes do not indeed lie within the reach of philosophy, nor even within the sphere of our comprehension; nor, consequently, on the actual reaching of them does the existence of philosophy depend. But as philosophy is the knowledge of effects in their causes, the tendency of philosophy is ever upwards; and philosophy can in thought, in theory, only be viewed as accomplished,—which, in reality, it can never be, when the ultimate causes,—the causes on which all other causes depend, have been attained and understood.”¹

Illustrations.—Partly to illustrate this passage,—whilst we have no doubt whatever that there are objects

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 56–9. *Secondary* cause might be regarded as medial process; and thus experimental science would signify an articulate knowledge of *means* in their effects, and of effects in their means.

of sight in existence, we are equally certain that, according to the constitution of our nature, we require our eyes to see these objects: that is to say, our eyes are partly the means by which we see. A blind man, physically, is a man whose eyes are diseased, damaged or destroyed. For such a one to go to a picture-gallery would be allowed even by idealists and sceptics to be a useless proceeding, unless it was for some other purpose than to see pictures. And even as regards those possessed of sound visual organs, it is necessary for them to open their eyes in order that they may see. An external object bathed in the emanation called light, and placed in a certain position relative to the eyes, is also necessary to produce the consciousness of a visible and defined external object. Thus in order to produce defined visual manifestations, it appears that at least three factors are requisite, namely, (1) A subjective visual power or faculty of seeing; (2) an objective object capable of being seen; and (3) the presence of light. Proof: Withdraw the visual object from the presence of the visual organ, and it is no longer seen; conversely, close the visual organ, and the visual object is shut out; finally, withdraw the light and vision ceases. As Herbert Spencer says—"The so-called secondary attributes (of body) are neither objective nor subjective, but are the triple product of the subject, the object and the environing activities."¹

In a similar manner, the ear is partly the cause of hearing. All the thunder, or, say, all the electricity, lurking in the Tropics or in the United States of America, might be hurtling, and crashing and bellowing round the head of a man whose aural apparatus had been destroyed, without disturbing his equanimity in the least. Such a man does not go to concerts to hear the singing. Even when the hearing organ is defective, we all—inclusive of idealists, know how trying it is to enter into an argument

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 145 (3rd ed.).

with its possessor; therefore we may conclude that the aural apparatus is part of the means by which we hear. We are also quite certain that hearing is partly produced by objective commotion of some kind. When, for example, standing in a Railway Station, a steam-whistle diabolically yells into our ears, we have not the slightest doubt that the horrible sound is partly produced by an atmospheric impact on the aural organ from without. This may be proved even by sceptical persons if they will simply fold over, or stuff up, their ears under the infliction, which they will find to be lessened thereby. And what applies to piercing and harsh sounds, applies also to melodies and harmonies. That certain sounds are external in their origin can also be proved by showing that they take time to travel—a consideration which, even by itself, completely destroys any idealistic hypotheses, and vindicates the veracity of our perceptions. In a word we all claim to know something—certain facts touching what are called the causes of sound; and similarly of the sensations and perceptions acquired through the other senses. As Thomas Reid says—"The first principles of all the sciences must be the immediate dictates of our natural faculties, nor is it possible that we should have any other evidence of their truth."¹ All the opponents of Common Sense are but playing at a more ridiculous kind of Blind Man's Buff.

Again, we know from experience, — unquestionable experience, whatever the Illusionists may say to the contrary, that hunger is, at least, partly caused by the absence of food; that thirst is partly caused by absence of moisture; that thirst is generally removable by a suitable

¹ *Works*, p. 591. The general recognition and acceptance of this one indubitable truth would save the world from whole jungles of pestiferous books. In the growth and expansion of Common Sense alone can we rationally hope for the subversion of Bedlam. Let it be noted that the inmates of Bedlam are simply those who have *in practice* departed from the Paths of Common Sense more widely than ordinary mortals.

drink; that hunger is appeasable by eating suitable viands. We know that hunger and thirst, if they continue long enough unappeased, will cause death. Coroners' juries, at all events, are frequently of this opinion. Under these various hypotheses, the Illusionists will have to explain away all these facts.

The mendacity of witnesses is one of the great troubles in Courts of Law. It is no less,—perhaps it is still more, the great trouble in the Arena of Philosophy. If we had the Devil in the witness-box, it is quite clear that a mere judge would be remarkably careful in construing his evidence on the case, or even about receiving it at all. Unhappily, also, we have frequently to be very cautious about receiving a human being's testimony either as to his philosophy or his purse,—more cautious, in many cases, I repeat, about the former than the latter. Man, it should be noted, only possesses the capability of being entirely honest, whereas all the more superficial writers—all the philodoxers, are continually quoting him, and doctrinising and writing about him, as if he were entirely honest. We must be constantly on our guard against this error.

Notice the continual conflict with fact and law,—the continual mental contortions, involved in all the Futilitarian hypotheses. Their exertations are continually unlawful and self-stultifying, and, I am afraid, in many cases, dishonest. It were to be wished that when the opponents of Common Sense begin their activities, they might be guilty of some kind of physical, as well as mental violence, so that the authorities in lunacy might have immediate claims upon them.

Again,—wings are clearly part of the motor power, or means, by which a bird rises into the air, and the buoyancy of the atmosphere clearly contributes to the same result. The mere possession of wings would not enable the birds to fly; the buoyancy of the atmosphere

would not enable it to fly without wings. A bird can fly partly because it has wings, and partly because the air is buoyant. So with regard to fishes and their fins. These are partly the means by which they make their way through the water. If, however, the Ocean were composed of treacle, we see at a glance that the fins would not work. Consider a trout in treacle! The possession of web-feet, also, is indubitably part of the mechanism, or means, by which a duck paddles along so capitally on the surface of the water. Obviously, the web-feet would not be nearly so serviceable in a pond of molasses.

Again, we partly know the cause, or causes, of the growth, say, of wheat. We know that suitable ground—*i.e.* ground found suitable by experience, should be carefully prepared for it—drained, cleaned, tilled; and that the seed should be carefully chosen and evenly sown in the Spring or Autumn. This is the farmer's part of the play. Without it there will be no wheat crop. But the farmer is not the sole cause; he is only a concause. Nature must complete his labours. Should Nature be very unkind, there may be no wheat crop. Should Nature be indifferently kind, there may be an indifferent crop. Should Nature be very kind, there will probably be a large crop. Under the present dispensation, man, to obtain a good wheat crop, must drain, weed, till, sow; with Nature rests the question of increase. Man, therefore, and the elements are the joint causes of the wheat crop. Withdraw either contributory, and we get deprived of it. Nature uncultivated will revert to the wild state. But for the clouds of dust raised by metaphysicians, such observations would be quite banal. They are continually warring against the facts and laws of Nature. They are positive malefactors in philosophy. The primary question of science to us who are not Creators, must always be—"What do we find in Nature—*i.e.* in Nature inclusive of ourselves?" The information conveyed to us by our

whole intellectual apparatus is quite satisfactory so far as it goes ; and we cannot even conceive the possibility of the external world being impressed upon us more authentically and distinctly than it is.

Even with regard to rarer occurrences it is never doubted that they have a cause. When a person who was supposed to be healthy is found dead, we immediately proceed to seek a cause for his death. Among the ancients, persons or places struck by lightning were regarded with horror as singularly devoted to the wrath of Heaven. Places so struck, as Gibbon reminds us, were surrounded with a wall, whilst things were buried with mysterious ceremony. The ancients could not, any more than ourselves, shake themselves free from the conviction that all the manifestations of Nature were caused.

Will as Cause.—We also know that certain results are due to the action of our wills, amongst other powers. For example, here is a catalogue of my books. It had a cause or causes. I judged it would be useful to have it ; I therefore willed that I would put myself to the trouble of making it. Will, guided by intelligence, set the necessary instruments at work, difficulties were surmounted and the catalogue was produced. Will was therefore, to some extent, the cause of it. Without the exercise of my will, that particular catalogue would not have been produced.

When we say that it is “within our power” to do a certain thing, we mean that, as within ourselves, we have the power (D.V.) of producing certain results ; as, for example, when Smith is in a position to put Brown into, or out of, a berth ; or to drive him into bankruptcy ; or to do him any other evil or good turn.

Again, we clearly know that there are things not within our power—things, to effect which we are not adequate as causes. If I wish to see Rome, I know that I cannot bring Rome to me—I must go to Rome. As the

fable has it, the mountain will not go even to Mahomet ; the aspiring prophet must be contented to trudge to the mountain. And in a million ways, all sane people feel their inadequacy, their feebleness, their helplessness, as causes ; though within indefinite limits, they actually know that they *are* causes. Our consciousness of will-power is equivalent to a consciousness of what is, to some extent, a causal power.

The disgrace of one member of a family is frequently the cause of bringing unmerited obloquy upon innocent members ; whilst the honour obtained by one, is sometimes the cause of undue regard being paid to the others. He who is born in a king's palace, although in reality, perhaps, a very scurvy fellow, may be regarded by inferior people as rather a great personage ; whilst, say, the greengrocer's assistant, though he were a model of piety, would scarcely be a *persona grata* in any mundane fashionable society.

Again, we are continually asking—"Why such an event or occurrence?" Reply—"Because so and so." Every "why" asked, is an inquiry after a cause. Every answer to such a "why" is the specification of a cause ; or a declaration of ignorance or uncertainty as to a cause. In practice at least, all mankind know this. Indeed, as far, at all events, as regards the finite, the human mind is charged with the thought and conviction that there is causality behind all the events and occurrences of Nature. Nay, it cannot get rid of the thought, or of the conviction which accompanies it, however vigorously it might attempt to effect such a riddance.

Our knowledge of Cause and Effect involves more than a linking of antecedent and consequent.—We might go on to an interminable length to show that we really know, beyond question, a great many causes and effects in every department, almost, of human experience. Indeed we are unable to think of anything finite but as having a cause ; or, conversely, unable to think of it but as an effect.

Cause and effect do not stand to us merely in the relationship of antecedent and consequent, as Hume and many others have erroneously supposed. They do indeed embrace that relationship; but the antecedent and the consequent carry with them not only the mark of going before and after, respectively, but also the additional and complementary note of resulting from an original potency. "When an object is presented phenomenally as commencing, we cannot but suppose that the compliment of existence which it now contains has previously been; in other words, that all that we at present come to know as an effect, must previously have existed in its causes, though what these causes are we may perhaps be altogether even unable to surmise."¹ Notice, carefully, it is not said that we must think *the* cause (*i.e.* the particular antecedents) of any event, but we must think that it had (whatever the immediate antecedents may be) *a* cause, and, ultimately a cause proper. The antecedent, proximate or secondary causes of any event are to be learned, *a posteriori*, by induction and generalisation; but by the constitution of our minds, we think of any event, *a priori*, as the result of a cause-proper, an actual potency, which, though unknown, may be sought after and discovered in its nearer processes.

We also think of Cause and Effect as balanced.—And not only do we think of events and occurrences as under the bond of cause and effect, but we also think of cause and effect as balanced: that is to say, that we expect to find that there shall be a certain equality between cause and effect—that the sum of the causes shall be adequate to the effect, and that the effect shall be adequate to the sum of the causes. Thus $A + B + C$, a cause, shall be able to produce X their effect; whilst X , the effect, shall be an adequate equation or result of $A + B + C$, the cause. For example, as soon as we fairly experience and apprehend what physical force is,—namely, "that which is expended

¹ Sir W. Hamilton : *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 400.

in producing or resisting motion," we apprehend, without any dubiety I think, that any butterfly with which we are acquainted on this planet (even the "two-to-an-acre" species) will be unable to draw a cartload of pig-iron. The butterfly as a cause, would be unable or inadequate to produce the required effect. Even the "trixy Ariel" always appears to me to be too light for the work upon which he is employed. Again, if we wish to crush a butterfly, we do not require heavy machinery for the purpose. We have not,—at least most of us have not, seen a mountain moving; but if we saw such a sight, we should know, from our general experiences, that it was not caused by a mouse, but should think of it as the effect of some prodigious volcanic force. If, on the other hand, we saw a slight movement of a nut-shellful of soft earth at our feet, we should not connect it in our thoughts with a terrific volcano, but perhaps, with kindly suspicions of a mouse or mole at work. In short, we do not only tell of events as under the relationship of cause and effect, but also as under the relationship of adequate cause and effect. These facts are of immense significance in the theistic conclusion.

A similar law governs human affairs. The British Throne, say, is not likely to be upset by a squabble in any country post-office; although it is within the bounds of the conceivable that such a squabble might acquire such a momentum as would produce serious results. "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. Behold how great a fire a little spark kindleth"—if it be not quenched in reasonable time. But all this only illustrates the truth that, from our general experience, we expect to find in all finite events, not only cause and effect, but adequacy, or rather equation, between cause and effect.

Results are probably the equation of the efforts and energies expended.—Again, in all our actions and enterprises, we try, or should try, to square our efforts pretty closely

with the magnitude of the results which we wish to produce. In lifting a glass of wine to the lips, we don't try to exert the strength of a giant over it. We are contented to take it up gracefully between the finger and thumb. If we have to dig a drain or load a ship, we see at a glance that a graceful movement of the finger and thumb is not sufficient for the proposed enterprise—not adequate as a cause to produce the desired effect. We see at a glance that we must throw our whole body into the business, or that as far as we are concerned, the drain will remain undug and the ship unloaded. So, with regard to any great engineering, or martial, or any other kind of enterprise. “Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook, or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down !”

Similarly in the Moral field.—The same in the moral field. There can be no hero without heroic effort. You are not going to arrive at the stars in a spirit of levity ! You must climb seriously, steadily, day by day. You must be as earnest in your labours as the Gods. If you don't try to climb at all— ! You may arrive in the Pit. All prudent persons should reflect upon such possibilities. One must be as blind as an oyster not to see such things.

Also, a man should carry right weapons with him—or tools, as the case may require. You cannot expect Hercules to fight in a truly Herculean manner with a willow-wand. He should be armed, if possible, with his club of knotted oak when he goes out among the evil giants.

Nothing great, is popular and easy.—The young man of whom it is written that “oysters and his mother were the only things he loved,” is not likely to become a great man. He is likely to forget even his mother and become wholly devoted to oysters : so that what has been said is evidently true, namely, that in all our actions and enterprises, we (sane persons) apprehend that the results for which we seek can only be produced by an adequate

outlay of personal energy—material or spiritual as the case may demand. Great enterprises demand great efforts. Nothing great is popular and easy: in view of which indubitable fact or truth, we see the fatuity, for example, of all materialism. The Materialist as such, has no sensible word to address to our higher nature at all. He ignores the rational and free individual, present in every normal man. He reduces himself to the level of a crab sprawling in its mudhole—the blind creature of nature and environment. It is obvious that there is no prospect in front of the consistent Materialist but abolition—or worse.

Design also, is an aspect of Causes and Effect.—Design is another aspect of cause and effect. We know that men design things. Within the whole circle of experience, we are not aware that anything good, beautiful, or useful can be accomplished without a designer. Further, we are not aware that any design can be accomplished without working up to it. As far as experience goes, at all events, ends (= design) can only be devised by intelligence and attained through intelligence, or something *not less* than intelligence. These facts, also, are of boundless significance in the theistic conclusion.

Catholicity of these conclusions.—Now notice that in all we have been saying about cause and effect, we carry with us the implicit, if not the explicit, assent, not only of civilised nations, but, I think we may say, even of savages and children as well. In a word, we carry with us the practical assent of all human beings who are fit to form an intelligent opinion about anything. In philosophy it is a pleasant thing,—also very significant and of vast philosophic importance, to be able to carry with us in a long series of high propositions the practical assent or consent of the human race. This is Catholicity—Common Sense.

It always appears to me that even an Archangel without Common Sense — if we can suppose the exist-

ence of such a being, would be a most unsatisfactory kind of acquaintance ; for let it be constantly borne in mind that to be without Common Sense, or even to be defective in Common Sense, is infallibly distinctive of duncery. All the Futilitarian philosophy is as impabulous to the human mind as a cork bung to the ordinary human stomach. As Reid admirably said—" Truth has an affinity with the human understanding which error hath not. And right principles of conduct have an affinity with a candid mind, which wrong principles have not. When they are set before it in a just light, a well-disposed mind recognises this affinity, feels their authority, and perceives them to be genuine." ¹

It is obviously quite preposterous—a contradiction in terms, to look for any truth outside Nature ; and it is equally preposterous to suppose that we can do anything advantageous and permanently valid in opposition to Nature, or in neglect of Nature. And yet a very large number of philosophers spend most of their time scraping about in each other's rubbish heaps, largely ignoring the lessons of Nature herself.² They have tortuously and painfully discussed to no profitable purpose what Thales and a thousand successors have deviously, darkly and fatuously speculated, whilst they have largely neglected what Nature has clearly said and continues to say. Surely it must be a clear mark of prudence to address ourselves closely to learn the actual works of Nature—God's Works mainly, with their logical implications—not more or less

¹ *Works*, p. 596.

² *e.g.*, as Professor Seth remarks—"It is not to be denied that philosophy is studied at the present time in Germany, almost exclusively in a historical interest." *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 130. A study which, on the whole, has resulted hitherto in a mere Babel of confused noises, and which ought, for the most part, to be abandoned. At best, the pedigree of doctrines and opinions is a poor study—as poor almost as the pedigree of the cockroach ; and like many tributaries of rivers, too meagre, devious and tortuous to be traced.

distracted men's more or less foolish theories concerning them. Comte tells us that Kepler was "the first man for twenty centuries who had the courage to go back to the beginning, as if nothing had been done in the way of theory."¹ This must always be the right method of study,—the method of Common Sense—No authority but Nature. "The philosophical spirit is simply a methodical extension of popular good sense to all subjects accessible to human reason."²

6. *The Known in Human Nature.* — Above all, we know a great many things regarding ourselves with absolute certitude—with a certitude so absolute that we cannot even conceive any certainty more absolute. I know, for example, that I am I, and have no doubt whatever that you are you. I don't take you to be merely a mental modification of myself, or a tertian quiddity, or a "permanent possibility of sensations," or an ontological phantasm or Will-o'-the-wisp of any kind whatever, but a real, original, clean-cut personality, an entity as actual and independent as I am myself. I know that there is something rightly called *me*, and something that cannot be called *me*. So do you as to yourself. I cannot for the life of me think that I contain the Universe; and, for the life of me, I cannot but think that the Universe contains me: a conviction which, even taken alone, utterly destroys the possibility of any rational system of idealism. I know that I occupy space and that the non-ego also occupies space: so do you. I know that I see a table or a chair—and can sit on it if I choose. I know that I can see a house or a town; a mountain or a sea; the sun or the moon; or a vast expanse of space. I know that I can scent, taste, hear, see or touch things. Dr. Johnson

¹ *Positive Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 172 (H. Martineau's tr.). Obviously the only rational method in psychology.

² *Ib.* vol. ii. p. 512. It must not be forgotten that *I include the whole man* in Nature.

declared that he "smelt Edinburgh in the dark." I doubt not that, in those days, he might have smelt it even amid the distractions of daylight. Think, too, of Coleridge's experiences in Cologne—

"In Köhln, a town of monks and bones,
And pavements fanged with murderous stones,
And rags and hags and hideous wenches,
I counted two-and-seventy stenchs
All well defined, and several stinks."

I know that I can feel agreeable and disagreeable sensations up to almost any degree of pleasure and down to almost any degree of pain. I hold all these Dogmas of Nature, as I have ventured to call them, to be utterly indisputable. The man who denies them—the Illusionist of any school, he stands before us humourless, unblushing; an incarnated, a concrete joke. No man possessed of any tincture of humour can be an illusionist.

I know that there is what we call present, past and future time. So do all the Grammarians. I know that I can partly remember and, to some short extent, anticipate things. I know that I can, to some extent, recall things by the special exercise of my memory and my will. I know that I can conceive and imagine things. So do you with respect to all these processes—although there be poor souls going about pretending that they are not certain about anything,—not even whether they are alive or not.

Three elements in every act of cognition.—Thus all monistic schemes of metaphysics are futile and self-stultifying—ever warring against the facts of consciousness—the Dogmas of Nature. In every act of cognition there are three elements—the Mind, the Thought and the thing thought about: for the Thought may be regarded as the middle term or connecting link between Mind and the Thing thought about. These elements cannot be reduced to a unity. There is no monistic system capable of dealing

with these irreducible facts of consciousness—*i.e.* of interpreting them in monistic terms. In no conceivable circumstances can you monify a man and his environment, any more than you can monify a smith and his anvil. You cannot successfully monify Jones and Brown even in thought, much less, if possible, Jones and the Universe, or Jones and the Deity: so that all monistic systems (whether idealistic, materialistic or pantheistic) are much less excusable than Bedlam madness; for it appears that “in their extreme aberrations, in their most furious delirium, madmen do not confound what it is impossible for the most extravagant logic to confound.”¹ We must be ever on the alert to detect, and resolute to expel false assumptions from our computative and speculative efforts. The admission of one false assumption may introduce wholesale anarchy into whatever science or sciences it may be related, as, for example, when a metaphysician impeaches the veracity of consciousness; or a theologian, the validity of the moral judgment; or when anybody calls Reason in question.

Rationalism is a term frequently misunderstood and misapplied.—Rationalism, indeed, is a name too frequently applied to *bad* reasoning—*i.e.* to irrationality; and is, in general, ignorantly abused by ignorance—especially in theology; yet we know that we may reason correctly and that Reason itself is ever faithful to the truth—that her positions are ever impregnable.

“Nam neque decipitur Ratio nec decipit unquam.”²

For example, to put it abstractly, I know (positively) that A is B; or (negatively) that A is not B; or (with suspense

¹ M. Morel, quoted by MacCosh: *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 291.

² Manilius, quoted by Sir W. Hamilton: *Discussions*, p. 625. I steadily refuse to believe with the theologians that the Almighty fears human thought, and that He wishes to give us all, concussion of the brain. I believe that the highest praise of God is *praise with understanding*.

of judgment) that A is either B or not B. To express it concretely, A is (positively) a horse; or (negatively) A is not a horse; or (with suspense of judgment) that A is either a horse, or not a horse. I can gather together or build up general propositions, and syllogise from them with logical, *i.e.* formal, precision: *e.g.* "All horses are quadrupeds; this is a horse; therefore this is a quadruped." We know that two and two are four; that a straight line is the shortest distance between any two given points; that any two sides of any triangle taken together are longer than its third side; that the longest side of any triangle is shorter than the other two sides taken together; and that any person who denies such truths is not worth speaking to.

Inequality of mental endowment does not impair the validity of Common Sense.—We know also, of course, that some persons can see such truths much more readily than others, there being, evidently, a great difference of degree in the mental powers of different persons. Some can calculate eclipses and make the most abstruse geometrical and arithmetical computations; some can scarcely grapple successfully even with the simple processes of addition and subtraction: but so far as the weaker intellect can apprehend and reason, it comes to the same conclusions as the stronger intellect. We discover complete Catholicity in Cocker's Arithmetic. It appeals to all intelligences alike, *so far as they understand it*. The incapability of a dunce is no impeachment of the Catholicity of Cocker.

This great fact is to be closely observed and forever respected. The opponents of Common Sense are continually making the assumption that mankind are not homogeneous; that there is an absence of fundamental Catholicity amongst them with respect to the false and the true; and they refer us to the proceedings of Central Africans, South Sea Islanders and Australian Bushmen for proof of their

assumption.¹ The reference does not warrant their assumption. The highest warranty which it yields against them is that their faculties, either through defect of original endowment, or, more probably, through lack of employment and opportunity of employment, are not generally as good as ours. In any case, although the Australian Bushman is not as strong in the Multiplication Table as a clerk in Threadneedle Street, it should never enter into anybody's head to suppose from such a disparity that he is not homogeneous with the Londoner. The great and all-important fact to be noted is that in as far as the Bushman understands the Multiplication Table, he is in absolute agreement with the Threadneedle Street man concerning it, and can count his breakfast eggs as well as anybody. In a word, the utmost disparity in mere degree or quality of the mental endowment, appears to be absolutely consonant with complete homogeneity of species. The greatest dunce is not opposed to, but is merely the intellectual inferior of, Newton.

Again, we all know beyond question, that we can feel hunger, or thirst, or satiety; and that we desire, or do not desire, certain things. The jams and jellies of the world are much sought after; there is no great demand for pemmican. We know that there are odours so sweet as to seem wafted from Heaven; others that might make a cripple run.

We know that we may respond to, appreciate, admire, love or adore certain persons, or properties, or things; or the contrary.

¹ The Australian Bushman has been infamously slandered and libelled by superficial observers. See "The Position of the Australian Aborigines in the Scale of Human Intelligence," by the Hon. J. Mildred Creed: *Nineteenth Century*, January 1905, pp. 89-96. The Human Race, too, are quite homogeneous in their vices as well as in their virtues. A West-Indian negress will address her mistress thus:—"Missus, dere's a lady at de back door wants you to gib her a pair of old boots." "Dat lady hab basket of eggs to sell." Mrs. Blake: "In the Bahamas," *Nineteenth Century*, May 1888, p. 686—exactly as the British domestic servant of to-day may announce "a gentleman at the back-door" selling laces or knife-polish.

We know that within indefinite limits we can do, or refrain from doing, certain actions ; choose, or refrain from choosing, to perform them ; but we also know at the same time that outside an indefinite limit, we have no choice whatever. Will we, or nill we, we proceed from youth to middle age ; from middle age to old age. We know that we were born and that we are more than likely to die, despite any wishes we may have to the contrary. Anybody knows that he may go out into the street and throw his hat up into the air, but that, on the other hand, even if he does so, he will not be able to prevent it from coming down again.

“ All man’s diligence is idle,
When against a greater power
And a higher cause it striveth.”¹

The knowledge involved herein of what we may do and not do, yields more authentic and overwhelming evidence of the freedom of the human mind than any library of dubitational, deterministic or fatalistic volumes can disturb. Indeed, all such knowledge may, I think, be regarded as quite beyond dispute ; thoroughly authentic and reliable,—notwithstanding the fact that so great a multitude of philodoxers have denied it, or tried to create doubts about it.

7. *The Known in Morals especially.*—And from our consciousness of knowledge and freedom of choice and action, we have our knowledge of rightness or wrongness in the moral sense, with the concomitant convictions of personal credit or blame extending to our conduct. In short, we know that man is a rational and moral being potentially. That is to say, he knows that he may be rational and moral if he chooses. When a person does not really know this, a lunatic asylum or a jail is the right receptacle for him. Apart from the possibility of morality, life would resolve itself into a mere contest between cunning and brute strength.

¹ Calderon : *Life is a dream*, 3. 13.

A profound mistake made by the Historian, Gibbon.—Indeed there is no end to the importance of the laws and facts which we do actually know; no end to the intrinsic significance of the laws and facts about which we have no doubt whatever. Some of the very greatest things are very easily known.

“Wisdom is often nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.”

We have completely subverted the truth when we run away with the too common fancy that Reason has to deal only with small things. For example, take the following sentence from Gibbon touching the early Christians:—“The desire of perfection became the ruling passion of their souls; and it is well known that while reason *embraces a cold mediocrity*, our passions hurry us with rapid violence over the space which lies between the most opposite extremes.”¹ The historian could scarcely have run wider of the truth. In moral questions, Reason can have no liking whatever for “cold mediocrity.” Such a liking were highly irrational. Reason according to the Common-Sense method of computation, seeks for the sublimest things,—strives after perfection,—can be contented with nothing short of such striving. Brown is a dunce if he has no desire for perfection; for I take moral perfection to be nothing more nor less than an absolute harmony between thinking (*i.e.* Reason) and living; and it is surely Brown’s plain duty to live in harmony with his best thoughts. As this is a matter of boundless importance, we will view it more closely.

The aim of the lover of wisdom.—I take it that the aim of the true philosopher, or lover of wisdom, must be the perfecting of his whole being in all its powers and capacities; all these powers and capacities being rightly ordained, co-ordinated, and subordinated in their relation-

¹ *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 317.

ship to each other. For it is to be noted that the lower senses, in themselves, are not sinful, as so many of the theologians seem to hold, neither are the passions. Take the passion of anger. How proper on many occasions!¹ Indeed the man who cannot be very angry on fit occasion, is not likely to possess a very tender faculty of love. But indubitably it is for intelligence to govern this and all other passions. Every other part of our nature should submit—even for its own advantage, to be governed by intelligence. “The people that doth not understand shall fall.” Every man should toil to understand, as a matter of primary duty, and to govern himself by intelligence, even as for his chief interest. Perverse doctrines of any kind will generally be found to be distortions due to sin and ignorance. The intellect itself does not readily—if at all, consent to error.

We begin life amid a complexus of ignorance, falsehood, passion, and weakness—not organically defective, but intellectually and morally confused. It is the work—the sacred work of intelligence to know, and, by knowledge, to dissipate ignorance, quell and regulate the passions, and clarify the soul from their disturbing, distorting and illegitimate influences. This is the proper task of man—to cleanse and govern himself. Until the soul be thus cleansed and governed, it cannot see clearly and act rightly. This is the chief problem of civilisation—not to develop new organs, as is implied in the jargon of the evolutionists, but to cultivate the organs which we already possess to the highest pitch of which they are capable. We may indeed invent new tools, but it would take a crazy man to suppose that he can evolve a new organ.

¹ “It is meet to let loose one’s anger against a person incontinently sinful, and past all exhortation depraved. On which account we have seen that the good man ought to be conspicuous for possessing a spirit, and yet to be on each occasion, mild.” Plato: *The Laws*, Bk. v. c. iv.

Christ, the Philosopher of Philosophers.—Accepting this view of the case, it appears probable that no other than Christ Himself was the Philosopher of Philosophers; for it should be noticed that the object of the Christian Gospel was not to furnish men with new faculties nor even to save them in the sense of rescuing a dog from drowning (as so many of the theologians seem to accept it), but rather to induce us to make proper use of the faculties which we do possess; to seek after certain “unsearchable riches,” and to be “filled with all the fulness of God”:—that was, to attain if possible, to the utmost perfection of which our being was capable. Man stands in no need of Darwinian evolution, but in great need of intellectual education and of severe moral drill and discipline. The Darwinian faith can do nothing for a man. A moral Gospel may renovate his whole being. Morality is the very oxygen of social life. Under God, we have no hope but in morals.

The value of a Philosophy or a Theology determinable by its practical worth.—Briefly, the value of a philosophy or a theology, as of anything else, may be gauged by its actual, *i.e.* by its practical worth. The true philosopher is mainly interested in all those questions in which Smith and Brown *ought* to be mainly interested, and should pay almost no attention to the specialities of pedants and philodoxers. Indeed, the only true philosopher is the man who actually does what he ought to do. It must be the very highest work of the philosopher and the theologian to ascertain, as it must be their noblest mission to teach and impress upon people, or rather to educe from their inner consciousness, the great facts and laws of human nature and human life. Unfortunately they have been too much accustomed not to observe those great facts and laws—*e.g.* those of our moral nature; and have too frequently made the disastrous mistake of attempting to make such facts

and laws as they have seen, square with their preconceived systems, instead of moulding their systems, as they obviously should do, into clear harmony with natural laws and facts. As long as the World's Head is in a state of gross muddlement as to its chief and noblest interests, what high hope can there be for it?

The Known in Morals utterly opposed to mechanical and fatalistic schemes of Nature.—Just let us notice some of these great laws and facts of our moral nature. It is an indubitable truth, for instance, that the drunkard in his drunkenness, and the glutton in his gluttony are, *quoad* their gluttony and drunkenness, essentially and eternally ugly. Do not believe Mr. John Stuart Mill or Mr. Leslie Stephen or any of the Futilitarian philosophers, however copiously they write or speechify to the contrary. It is clean contrary to human nature to hold either a glutton or a drunkard, as such, in respect. If he will not reform, or at least make a gallant effort to reform, he is worthy of death and burial—under broken bottles, if you like. The general sensualist is, essentially, but a hog on two feet. His appropriate motto would be *Sus Minervam docet*. We cannot possibly respect such persons. We don't admit any difference of opinion on such a subject any more than we admit different versions of the Multiplication Table. This should be clearly understood of the people. Further, I say that even the school of Mr. Cotter Morison and Mr. Edward Clodd, must go with us in our conclusion. Supposing we had a whole congregation of Cotter Morisons and Edward Clodds, and supposing that one of their number, a drunkard, were to stagger into the midst of their meeting, even such a congregation would have no face to receive him with any marks of approbation, but rather with feelings of genuine shame that any member of their sect should be so besotted. Now feelings of

shame and mechanical or deterministic doctrines cannot possibly harmonise with each other. The sacred potentiality of blushing can only belong to a consciously free and responsible being. Materialists of every sect should reflect upon this truth and its significances. If our drunkard, however, seems to make a real effort to reform, we all regard him with very different feelings.

Again, the tendency of certain theories is to efface, or at least to minimise, the distinction between blackguards and honest men; but I think that all sensible persons are pretty well agreed as to the radical difference between them. No man can regard a thief with heartfelt admiration or respect. Materialists, Determinists, and all kinds of Futilitarian philosophers, help to hunt thieves down and place them in the dock just as keenly as magistrates and policemen and men of Common Sense do. This, too, is a fact of immense significance. Unhampered by their theories, they immediately admit the sovereignty of Common Sense. As Aristophanes has said—If you rob your friend, what satisfactory argument will you be able to adduce “that you are not a black-guard”?¹—even though you be a materialist or an illusionist of any sort. Notice that this one Aristophanic poser explodes all the theories of materialism, idealism, and scepticism. Common Sense is a much more powerful explosive than dynamite or gun-cotton. When Nature compels a man to act against his theory, he may safely take it that his theory is wrong.

Quite obviously, it is not the clothes, but the man or woman under them, that counts in the long run. Every member of every school of philosophy (even the most ridiculous) and every sane person outside the schools of philosophy, is privately convinced that this doctrine is true. Carlyle mildly asks—“What, in the Devil’s name, is the use of Respectability, if thou inwardly,

¹ *The Clouds.*

art the pitifulest of all men? I wish thou wert either cold or hot." Alas that so many should be so much more concerned about the gignanities than about the humanities!

Fraud of every kind (when detected, at all events) is considered a thing of innate ugliness and hatefulness. Even "intent to defraud" is so considered. In this conclusion all the materialists and determinists are compelled to go with us. They cannot churn fine butter out of soapsuds. For fine butter, they must, like the rest of us, be contented to agitate Nature's own sweet milk.

No man can respect one whom he knows to be a liar. "Great and grim is the reward for the breaking of plighted troth." The perjured person is at a large discount both in public and private esteem. "An oath weighs naught with one of scoundrel soul," and he is regarded accordingly. Never in the history of the human race was a monument erected to a man on the ground that he was a great liar, and never will such a thing be done—not even by materialists of any denomination. On the contrary, when they proceed to put up a monument to a man who really was a great liar,—for, alas, there are, I am afraid, some monuments to liars standing about, they assert that he was a man of great truth and uprightness; for even dunces know that there is a soul in human nature which respects him that is true. Indeed each man may best study the chief problems of humanity in his own soul.

No person respects the envious, or the slanderous, or the covetous soul; but on the other hand, no man can keep himself from respecting the liberal, the generous, the magnanimous. "The duty of him who receives a kindness is to retain the memory of it for ever, but of him who confers it, to forget it immediately,"¹ Who

¹ Demosthenes, *De Corona*, s. 81.

so stupid as to be unable to admit the sanity of such a maxim at once?

Positively there are such distinctions amongst mankind as cowards and brave men. A person who has fled out of battle, and is known to have done so, could not properly be received in any society to the strains of "Lo, the conquering hero comes!" On the other hand, it is highly appropriate and thrilling to receive a valiant person returned from heroic action, with such strains. We glory in noble valour. It is better than rubies and diamonds. The Pibroch must sound in all ages—Heroes to the Front! Persons bent on mere pudding, go to the rear—without music. Materialism may—and does, apparently, satisfy monkeys, but it can never administer to the nobler wants of men.

In the going to the right or to the left in the high field of action, there may be involved all the difference we conceive between a Heaven and a Hell—Asphodel Meads and Plains of Sulphur.

No one respects an intensely close-fisted Christian—such as John Girder, the cooper, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. "If there's onything totally uneatable," said generous John, "let it be gien to the puir folk." A wealthy woman in real life has been known to dispense her spent tea leaves to the poor, as a triumphant stroke of thrifty charity. For the life of us, we cannot respect such persons: we hold them in utter contempt. Their creed is coppers. These are the real materialists. They are our study in the infinitely base—whilst another person is so true and kind and noble, that he is really an ornament and a glory to the Universe. This is the true man.

Consider the immense disparity that exists between the mere saying and the actual doing of a thing. Sounds and appearances in the moral world, are of little account. One of the greatest rascals I have known, looks and speaks

continually like a perfect example of sorrowing Piety. If any artist wishes to paint the subject, he should secure this man to sit for him. With a pietistical tear in his eye, he will probably succeed in robbing you more than once, if you give him any business to do. Contrast such a person with one you can trust.

One person is fit to sit and hold the Balances of Justice. Another is being continually pursued by Justice. The materialist need not take his theory with him into a Police Court. *There*, he must not claim to be a spring-man.

One man is wicked to the very best of his poor ability. Another is so good that to know him is almost a benediction. Consider the width of the gulf that lies between such persons. The view of the one fills us with optimism; of the other, with pessimism.

Men are continually guilty of doing what they know they should not do.—We all know as a matter of indubitable fact that, amongst all its multitudinous wants, a state actually requires “a large scaffold and gallows of timber.” Consider the unutterable moral significance of this fact. Such apparatus is wanted because some men will tragically persist in doing *what they know they should not do*, and which they are nowise compelled to do; because they make use of their freedom to compass other men’s destruction. The direst criminal knows what guilt and innocence fundamentally and respectively mean; and is never known to get entangled in philosophic difficulties over such questions. His point is invariably, to show either that he did not do the deed of which he is accused, at all, or to show that it was done in extenuating circumstances. There is of course the third alternative, namely, when he claims to be a madman and entitled to the privileges of a madman. Let it be always remembered, then, that the gallows is no mystical apparatus, no tertian quiddity, no mental modification merely, no staggering theory of philodoxers, no

empty dream of self-delusionists of any school, but an indubitable fact of terrific and unquenchable significance. What is the use of sceptics, idealists and materialists announcing themselves in view of the actual need of such an apparatus? In the name of Smith and Brown, why should they announce themselves at all! To do so, can only be a tribute to their obstinate stupidity; and Solomon affirms that there is a terrible rod in pickle for everybody void of understanding,—otherwise, stupid persons.

There is a universal understanding as to elemental duties.—Can it be reasonably contended that any sane person is really in a state of dubiety as to what Righteousness substantially is—at a loss for a “moral sanction” as to how he should conduct his daily business? The great mass of everyday moral questions are quite easily determinable by Smith and Brown; and we may depend upon it that if they are of a casuistical nature and not easily determinable, they are not of much intrinsic importance. All such questions, I should think, we could afford to leave, say, to Jesuits and to people who have not very much to do. As to everyday questions, What barber does not, in this sense, know his duty to his patient, namely, that he shall shave him to the best of his ability and draw as little blood as possible? What commonest carter or cab-driver in the streets does not know that it is his duty to conduct his carting or his cab-driving with a due regard to the lives and limbs of other persons in the streets? Is there any smith or plumber or glazier who is morally in the dark as to how he should hammer, or plumb, or glaze? For my part I think it may be taken for granted that, from the moral point of view, every sane person knows the elemental duties of his office (namely, that he shall exercise his best skill and craftsmanship therein, in a spirit of integrity to all concerned), as well as a complete library of philosophy in all the languages, can tell him. If every smith, plumber, glazier, etc., were simply doing his work to

the very best of his individual moral convictions on the subject, may we not rest assured that, as far as our temporal interests are concerned, we should be in a very prosperous and happy state? The moral law shines almost as clear as daylight.

The dock exists by universal warranty.—Yet, despite these monitions of conscience which all Legislatures assume to be at least elementally possessed by all sane persons, we have sceptics in the world, men who profess doubts as to the validity, and even the existence, of the Moral Law!¹ Such wise men, in fact, that they don't know what to think about anything—are reduced, in other words, to a state of imbecile dubitation through sheer keenness of intellect! They actually receive a serious and patient hearing, too! But here, as already hinted, it should be noted and laid to heart that none of their dubitations avail them in the dock. The world could not proceed to business on the basis of their theories at all. No materialist, no determinist, no agnostic as to morals, no illusionist of any kind, need venture to air his theory in the dock—which, be it also noted, universally exists by universal warranty. Nor, though generally speaking, it is the most wretched specimens of humanity who appear in the dock, is it ever thought advisable, even by the keenest lawyer, to urge any materialistic, or agnostic, or illusionist doctrine as a reason why sentence should not be passed on them.

The sense of shame only explicable under moral law.—

¹ e.g. Mr. Leslie Stephen thinks that “to find a universal sanction for morality is chimerical.” (*The English Utilitarians*, vol. iii. p. 311.) It is no more so, I should say, than a universal sanction for the Multiplication Table; i.e. it is not chimerical at all, but an indubitable law. He opines that such a sanction would be a motive “which would apply to all men good or bad; that is, it would not be a moral motive” (*ib.* p. 311): which sally of ratiocination I do not pretend to follow. There is so much of the spirit of dubitation in Mr. Leslie Stephen's writings, that one might be led to suppose that he was not quite certain whether he was Mr. Leslie Stephen or the Stephen that was stoned.

Again, the sense of shame is only explicable under moral law. There could not exist such a feeling as shame—at all events there could be no justification for such a feeling, but on the understanding of moral freedom and moral law. It would be impossible for a necessitarian of any complexion to blush reasonably and consistently in any circumstances whatever—not though he were the lady or gentleman in the dock. Now, no philosopher should tolerate a scheme in which he cannot possibly act consistently. This one consideration should be the death of all illusionist schemes of philosophy. There is nothing more disgraceful to a philosopher than obstinate inconsistency.

Ideal and Heroic duties.—Again, there is a more or less distinct general preception of Ideal and Heroic duties,—perception of a “Chief Good,” of which perhaps all men have some glimmering, and after which good men aspire. Now the chief good is something not mainly to be found outside of ourselves in the material world, but something rather,—a spiritual state, which is mainly to be achieved within ourselves. The chief good is subjectively, not objectively, derived. It is an inner habitude corresponding to an inner law which, though unseen by the corporeal eye, yet demands the unconditional homage of intelligence. The Hero is not heroic, primarily, that he may obtain the applause of spectators, but in simple homage to the Good. The wish for happiness is not the martyr’s primary inspiration, but the sense of duty. He does not go to the stake to pander to public opinion, but to comply with demands of the Moral Law and to offer a sacrifice to the Holy.

“Patriots have toiled and in their country’s cause
 Bled nobly, and their deeds, as they deserve,
 Receive proud recompense. . . .
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
 Have fallen in her defence. . . .
 yet few remember them. They lived unknown
 Till persecution dragged them into fame

And chased them up to Heaven. With their names
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song ;
 And history so warm on meaner themes
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed,
 The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise."¹

In all cases of conscience the good man's chief trouble is to act so as to satisfy his own conceptions of duty—not other people's. He may succeed in pleasing others when his own conscience is burning with self-condemnation. There is nothing so difficult to pacify as a good man's own conscience. Should I please the whole world and leave my own conscience unsatisfied, I am out of harmony with myself and therefore miserable. In getting into perfect harmony with myself, I do not doubt that I am getting into perfect harmony with the Ruler of the Universe.

The hedonistic and "popular-opinion" schools of moralists fail to note this majestic truth that Virtue is no less exigent touching our inmost thoughts than touching our most public words and deeds. The members of these short-sighted colleges have left out of their calculations—

"The chivalry
 That dares the right and disregards alike
 The Yea and Nay o' the world."

If they say that this too is mere "self-seeking," they are confounding the straight with the crooked — reducing Virtue to Sin; depriving themselves of the power of discriminating between the hero and the sot.

That morality is not a sacrifice to popular opinion, nor to secular convenience, nor the result of mechanical necessity, will also be learned from a careful consideration of the question—"Have you always been perfectly pleased with your own conduct?" No reputable person, I apprehend, would be prepared to reply to this question in the affirmative. I think we may take it for granted that all men worth speaking about, are more or less conscious of

¹ *The Task*, Bk. v.

having been guilty of more or less moral dereliction in the course of their lives. Too frequently we have to confess—*Video meliora proboque deteriora sequor.*

Virtue presupposes that in all his actions, a man shall make the best use of his judgment.—An effort is frequently made to impugn the moral and religious judgment on the ground that great atrocities have frequently been committed in the name of morals and religion; but to do so, shows a complete misapprehension of the very nature of virtue—which demands that in all his actions, a man shall make the best possible use of his judgment. This is the point upon which the Torquemadas and Tittlemanns, Lauds and Bonners of history, professing to torture and slaughter men “for the good of their souls,” will have to satisfy Rhadamanthus. I don’t apprehend that any great scoundrel will be able on the plea of “good intention” in his scoundrelism, to satisfy that Great Judge. Guileless ruffians are persons in whom I do not believe.¹ If everybody “hated and abhorred lying,” as in duty bound, I think we should find ourselves in universal agreement about all high things. In any case, as Scogin saith, it is requisite “that a man beleve not every word that another doth speake, for some doe lie, some doe jest, some doe mocke and some doe scorne”—and behave generally, in a most unsatisfactory manner.

Men universally resent imputations of vice.—Again, I think we may take it for granted that all men worth speaking about, feel hurt—perhaps insulted or enraged, when they are charged with characteristics which they know to be untrue—such as that they are envious, jealous, dishonest, or the like. On deterministic principles, all such feelings,

¹ “It will be very difficult to persuade men of sense that he who with dry eyes and satisfaction of mind, can deliver his brother to the executioner to be burnt alive, does sincerely and heartily concern himself to save that brother from the flames of Hell in the world to come.” Locke: *Works*, vol. ii. p. 240.

of course, would be gratuitous and inexplicable. Materialism is dumb before conscience. In our conviction of moral freedom, we know that we should be too great for covetousness, or for jealousy, or for envy, or for any other mean passion.

Virtue regards the welfare of all.—If it be said that these very thoughts upon which we have been dwelling indicate “selfishness,” I reply, “Yes, *of a kind.*” Indeed it is inconceivable that any intelligent being, whatever, should not desire to be happy. *From the Deity downwards I should take it as a first principle that all desire to be happy.* Why not? But note the mighty difference between the selfishness of the vicious man and the so-called “selfishness” of the virtuous. Whilst that of the former ends in mere personal gratification and is probably opposed to the welfare of others, that of the latter is not only compatible with the welfare of others, but earnestly seeks to promote the welfare of all. Virtuous men cannot be perfectly happy whilst beings as good as themselves are miserable. As long as a good man shall know that there is one being unjustly miserable, he cannot be completely happy. All good men, I think, will hold this proposition to be true; and if true, it destroys all mechanical and vicious schemes of morals and establishes the all-embracing character of virtuous affections,—the natural beneficence and majesty of human nature. In a word, we know that virtue, reduced to practice, is that course of life which seeks to promote the good—*i.e.* the highest health and happiness of all. So that the difference between the selfishness of the bad man and the “selfishness” of the good, actually seems to be of supernal and infernal significance. It is inconceivable that the good and the bad could be more completely opposed to each other than we plainly perceive them to be.

Great men and virtue.—We also know that great men have ever a great admiration for virtue. “Wise men,”

says Plato, should bestow their attention "wholly on virtue, in preference to every other pursuit."¹ It is possible, says Aristotle, "to perform honourable things without being lord of earth or sea; for a man may be able to act according to virtue with moderate means . . . for it is possible that men who have moderate possessions should do *what they ought*."²

All are in a position to do "what they ought."—Majestic truth here. All men are in a position to do "what they ought." To this proposition I don't think there can be any honest opponents; and it is a proposition of the utmost significance. No honest pursuit is so humble that true dignity may not be attained in it. From this point of view, the most humble of private persons is called upon every day, it may be, to decide questions of as much, or perhaps of greater intrinsic importance than are frequently deliberated over in Cabinet Councils. There is no progress worth speaking about compared to moral progress. Dignity is only to be found in Morals; and as Morals are the province, or should be the province of all, dignity is equally within the reach of all. Indeed I take this to be the central doctrine of Christianity itself. And yet we have Cardinal Newman fatuously talking about "irreligious virtue!"³—as if any virtue could be irreligious. It is painful to contrast the wisdom of the so-called heathen philosopher with the want of wisdom displayed by the Christian theologian. It appears to me that many of our theologians have defaced and degraded the religion of Christ. They might as well try to make butter without milk as a religious man without personal virtue. James Thomson finely says—

"True comeliness which nothing can impair
Dwells in the mind: all else is vanity and glare."⁴

¹ *The Timæus*, c. i.

² *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. x. c. viii. 15-16.

³ *Memoir of James Hope Scott*, vol. ii. p. 265.

⁴ *Castle of Indolence*, ii. 33.

Virtue and Vice are generally thought of as carrying appropriate consequences.—Thus, Virtue and Vice are not delusions, but immense realities of immensely different rational significance. In rational computation, virtue actually blesses, vice actually curses, the doer. “Salvation” and “Damnation” appear to be actual and perfectly logical results of the kind of life that is led. “Salvation” is a strictly ethical and logical process; so “Damnation”: more certain in their working, perhaps, than the law of gravitation. Men seem to be steadily working out their own salvation every day, or, as the terrible case may be, their own damnation. To be not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but to be a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate—surely, without doubt, it is a great programme. To be abominable and disobedient and to every good work, reprobate—surely, without doubt, is to be in a desperate state. Is it to be thought that a sot is a fit and proper person to enter the Gates of Paradise? Is it to be thought, in any case, that our hero should go *ad Inferos*? “My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.” Surely it is all strictly rational. I wish that all our clergy would notice these things, and preach them with hearts of fire.

Yet in view of these palpable manifestations of the working of moral law, Mr. Benjamin Kidd tells us that “a rational religion is a scientific impossibility representing from the nature of the case an inherent contradiction of terms!”¹ What is to be done with such “thinkers”? It is said in Ecclesiasticus—“He that is not wise will not be taught.” I would suggest that a rational religion is no more of a “scientific impossibility” than a rational pudding, and is an infinitely grander subject. To steal, for example, must always be one of the most expensive ways of obtaining property. To live so as to have a conscience

¹ *Social Evolution*, p. 101.

void of offence towards God and men must always be a holy and beautiful manner of life. That I take to be elemental religion. Wherein does it contain "an inherent contradiction of terms"? The person who aims at being a man and not a mere anthropoid, cannot be too religious, and may be religious, in the sense indicated, in the most scientific manner; and the effects of such a religion or of the want of such a religion, are likely to be more or less manifested in our lives.

Great Literature is deeply pervaded by this thought.—We cannot go far in Literature, for example, without finding that it is deeply pervaded by this thought—

"Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God."¹

"Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man."² Can there be any doubt about it?

"Through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches."³ This saying is as grandly true of the building up and furnishing of the human soul as it is of the earthly house—much more grandly true, indeed.

"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength."⁴

"I went by the field of the slothful and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and lo, it was all overgrown with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Solomon was not "void of understanding"; keen

¹ Gen. iii. 8.

³ Prov. xxiv. 3-4.

² Job xxxv. 8.

⁴ *Ib.* xxiv. 5.

was his discernment; great, his intellectual pith. I wish he was a great deal more studied and taught.

Or glance at the Greeks. Zeus, according to Aeschylus,

“Sendeth forth on men transgressing
Erinnys, slow but sure avenger.”¹

But—

“One who of his own free will is just,
Not by enforced constraint,
He shall not be unblessed,
Nor can he e’er be utterly o’erthrown.”²

Sophocles was of opinion that—

“Evil fruit
Could not but follow on a life of ill”;³

whilst, on the other hand, he held that—

“Though late, to learn and do
What Wisdom bade, had certainty of gain.”⁴

So with the moderns:—

“If the midnight bell
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound on into the drowsy race of night;
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
And thou possessèd with a thousand wrongs

Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears and harmful sound of words;
Then in despite of brooded watchful day,
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.”⁵

So terrible are some thoughts, even, that in Shakespeare’s

¹ *Agamemnon*, 58-9 (Plumtre’s tr.).

² *Eumenides*, 520-3.

³ *Electra*, 308-9 (Campbell’s tr.).

⁴ *The Trachinian Maidens*, 91-2.

⁵ *King John*, iii. 3.

opinion, they are only fit to be uttered amid darkness and horrors. Or study Clarence's dream :—

"My dream was lengthened after life.
O then began the tempest to my soul !
I passed, methought, the melancholy flood
With that sour ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did meet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick,
Who cried aloud, '*What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?*'
And so he vanished. Then came wandering by
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
Dabbled in blood, and he shrieked out aloud,
'*Clarence is come,—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
That stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury ;
Seize on him, furies ; take him to your torments !*'

I trembling waked, and for a season after,
Could not believe but that I was in Hell ;
Such terrible impression made my dream."¹

Milton's works are, of course, pervaded by similar thoughts :—

"Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness to be known,
As when thou stood'st in Heaven, upright and pure ;
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee ; and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul."²

Or, take the grand lines in the *Comus* :—

"Mortals that would follow me
Love Virtue ; she alone is free.
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or if virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

None of these things can happen on mechanical principles.

¹ *King Richard III.*, Act i. 4.

² *Paradise Lost*, Bk. iv.

On such questions, Burns is agreed with all the great geniuses—

“When ranting round in pleasure’s ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gi’e a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we’re tempest driven,
A conscience but a canker,
A correspondence fixed wi’ Heaven
Is sure a noble anchor.”

Of course there couldn’t be any “conscience” at all on sceptical, or materialistic, or deterministic principles.

Even Byron is convinced of the greatness of virtue:—

“Without a sigh would I resign
This busy scene of splendid woe,
To make that calm contentment mine
Which virtue knows or seems to know.”

And I think that Lytton properly estimates the results of a vicious life when he says—

“The broken heart can know no pang
Like that which racks the bad heart, when its sting
Poisons itself.”¹

We might quote to the same effect interminably. Men know these things. There is a tremendous, a terrific and sublime reality in our knowledge of Morals. The things “hated of David’s soul” would probably be hated of all souls, if they would only be honest with themselves. Through its moral endowments, there seems to be a kind of infinitude in the human mind—at all events, a stretching-out towards infinitude.

Gibbon on human discontent.—Take the case of the Emperor Severus as set forth by Gibbon:—“The ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers; but the possession of a throne could never yet

¹ *Duchesse de la Vallière*, Act v. 5.

afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had from an humble station elevated him to the first place among mankind. 'He had been all things,' as he said himself, 'and all was of little value.' . . . Satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed."¹ Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher. To be Captain of the Planet will not satisfy *a man*. To find large pearls in all our oysters, diamond quarries in all our mountains, were of no avail. Materialism cannot satisfy us; can yield no principle to aid us in the explanation of our moral nature. There is, probably, no satisfaction to be found for the human soul but in character, which can only be thought of as a spiritual and personal possession. It is in character alone that majesty can appear; in character alone that high satisfaction can be found. Severus was on the wrong track.

Supremacy of moral character.—What were the possession of seven-league boots—even if we could insert our feet into them and step out in them, if a man were not a good character! If you could travel with the celerity of a telegraphic message, it would avail nothing noble as long as you remained a sordid soul.

The thought of great size or of mere physical power scarcely impresses us at all—*e.g.* Lucifer in Dante and Milton, or other tall persons in other authors—

"My fore grandsire, hecht Fyn Mackowle,
That dang the devill and gart him yowle,
The skyis raynd quhen he wald scowle,
And trublit all the air;
He gat my grandsire Gog Magog,
And when he dansit, the world wald shog;

¹ *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 204. Notice a kindred experience in a life of a totally different kind. It occurred to John Stuart Mill to ask himself—"Whether he would be happy supposing that all his objects in life could be realised?" He records that "An irrepressible consciousness distinctly answered, No."—Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, iii. 19.

Five thousand ellis yeid in his frog
 Of hieland plaidis and mair,
 Ellevyne myle wyde was his mouth,
 His teeth was ten myle squair ;
 He would upon his tais stand
 And tak the sternis doune with his hande
 And set them in a gold garland
 Above his wyffis hair.”¹

It is all of no account. It would avail a man nothing if the Ocean were not big enough for him to bathe in, so long as he remained spiritually a mean person. Without any possibility of error, it appears that the best man is simply the man whose character is the noblest ; and, by the way, this is the doctrine that most needs to be taught and enforced in all our churches, colleges and schools—primary, secondary and tertiary. Better to aspire after the spiritual than to achieve even the most brilliant secular results. I wish our School Boards would take this matter up in earnest, and strenuously strive to drill youth in morals and manners—in truth, purity, industry, obedience, politeness, instead of growing enthusiastic over smatterings of the more trivial sciences. What glorious results might be anticipated if this doctrine—the intrinsic worth and majesty of moral character, were taught mightily every day in all those places of learning !

Power is nothing by itself—*i.e.* nothing worshipful. Mere beasts, monsters, miscreants, have had saints “in their power” before now, and have done unto them as they listed.

Character is within the reach of everybody.—In a word, character is the greatest thing conceivable, *as a matter of fact*. There is no room for agnosticism, I submit, nor even for dubiety, as to the truth of this doctrine. Doctrine that has no bearing upon character seems to be of comparatively minor importance. Notice also that this greatest achievement, character (Sonship to the Supreme ; Brotherhood

¹ Dunbar : *The Droichis Part of the Play*.

with the demi-gods), is apparently within the reach of everybody prepared to strive after it. Theoretically, it is within the power of every one to be a great character,—i.e. to be in the noblest sense, surpassingly rich. Herein lies the hope of true and general civilisation. To be civilised, men must be moralised. This thought should be an inspiration to all intelligent persons. It is within the actual range of each to lead a high and noble life. A king can do no more; an archangel can do no more; a peasant should do no less. It is only the temporary positions and advantages,—therefore, the comparatively trifling, which are not within the reach of everybody. The Eternal seems to be in favour of high character. In saying this, of course, I do not mean to assert that this highest achievement is easy of attainment. On the contrary, it is attainable only through heroic effort. Say not that we may be great on easy terms! That is but fond foolery—theological dotage.

The fruits of the moral and the immoral.—We know also that in human work, the immoral is the destructive, the death-dealing; whilst the moral is the germinal, the living, the fruit-bearing. Take a Napoleon striving for personal domination. There is no seed of fine and beautiful vitality in his work: it does but contain the elements of disruption and death. But take a great moral hero striving to renounce “the hidden things of dishonesty; not working in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth trying to commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Such work may bud and blossom and seed and reproduce Hesperian fruits through the Ages. Therefore Reason does not, as Gibbon seems to have fancied, deal merely with “cold mediocrity.” Reason loves all divine things; hates all devilish things. Better the smallest herb of grace that grows than the most flourishing upas-tree in all the Universe.

Consciousness is rich in sublime affirmatives and terrific

negatives.—"I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you; yea, who knoweth not such things as these?" So Job, on one occasion, replied to his friends when they had been presenting some important truths for his consideration. So, with the facts and truths with which we have been dealing, what attentive person may not know them? Even our most materialistic friends may easily know them. Men's consciousness is far superior to their lives, if they will only bring it into right focus. Indeed, it would appear that the things easily understood—though not easily done, make up, perhaps, all the overwhelming interests of life. Human Nature is rich both in sublime affirmatives and terrific negatives.¹ They are the divinest utterances we know. Given each man doing his simple duty to the best of his knowledge and ability, and we have the terrestrial Paradise.

Caution as to the use of Consciousness.—But here let me repeat my warning as to the method of using consciousness. A telescope *telescoped* is of little use. A kind of white blur is all that you can see through it even in daylight. But draw it out, and the distant landscape begins to acquire shape; and finally, when you have rightly focussed your instrument upon its object, you see it imaged in clearly defined beauty. So with consciousness. The individual consciousness *telescoped* does not see much, but focus it properly, either on the objective or the subjective Universe, and you can bring great things within clear vision.²

¹ Such writers as the author of the *Riddles of the Sphinx* should bethink themselves of those sublime affirmatives and terrific negatives. The author of that work in particular, seems to be in a raging delirium. He appears to think that "knowledge is impossible" (p. 85), and then ventures to state the opinion! Seeing that human intelligence announces so much to us that we must accept as true, agnosticism should not be taken up as a cult,—it should not be carried too far, or it, too, becomes ridiculous.

² I make this caveat because some philosophers (e.g. Mr. Leslie Stephen in *The English Utilitarians*) seem to suppose that consciousness is no consciousness unless it immediately sees everything at a glance! Now this

Conclusion as to the Known.—It is to be noted, then, and tenaciously held, that all those propositions with which we have been dealing, express well-known truths—not merely grand and high-sounding fictions, but, actually, plain incontestable truths of adamantine firmness, and of supernal and infernal significance. So that finite though we be, and unfit to grapple with infinite questions, we yet know many things which are apparently of boundless importance. The number of propositions in which all sane men are agreed—the number of large propositions in which pure intelligence forces them to agree, is quite wonderful. Such propositions are so numerous and powerful and far-reaching as to annul and subvert in thought all systems of philosophy and theology save one—namely, the catholic and divine system of common sense. All sane men are agreed that the testimonies of our faculties, whether as to first principle or fact, when taken in their integrity and rightly interpreted, are to be trusted, and that we cannot with impunity refuse to trust them. The world cannot proceed to business but upon this basis. It must be taken that all men agree with us—whatever they may protest to the contrary, in so far as they calculate as we calculate, and do as we do. This one consideration nullifies and reduces all the pyrrhonistic, idealistic, and materialistic systems of speculation to absurdity. All men are agreed

should not be expected. All that we can rightly expect is that it shall be fit for its purpose by the exercise of due effort and care; applying it first to simple things and then passing on to the complex and more difficult; just as the arithmetician begins with simple addition, passes on to the more difficult, and then perhaps up to the most complex calculations. And we find that consciousness in its various powers, is fit for this task according to the intellectual calibre of the individual; for it is also to be noted that intellects, like guns, are not all of the same calibre. The acute Machiavelli noted three degrees in the intellectual endowments of mankind. "One man," he said, "understands things by means of his own natural endowments; another, when they are explained to him; a third (the dunce) can neither understand them by himself nor when they are explained by others." *The Prince*, c. 22.

that Hegel and his boots are diverse entities and cannot conceivably be monified idealistically. This one consideration nullifies all the monistic systems on the idealistic side. All men are agreed that a brick and the thought of it, are facts which cannot conceivably be monified on the materialistic side. This one consideration destroys in thought, all the systems of pantheism and materialism. In such instances as I have adduced, the facts of each case are utterly opposed to Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel: therefore judgment must go against them *quoad* their peculiar systems in every sane court under the sun or above it. In the speculations especially attached to their respective names, Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel are utterly opposed to what I have called the Dogmas of Nature; and the Dogmas of Nature are so clear and irresistible that they overwhelm and render ridiculous every system of speculation that rises up against them. Thus whilst striving with all our might to root out and pull down and destroy falsehood, we may yet strongly build up and establish the truth.

In closing this section, let me earnestly repeat the wise words of the Chinese philosopher—"A knowledge of our own ignorance is a proof of our superiority, but ignorance of our own knowledge is nothing less than a mental malady, which like all other maladies will be best escaped by those who have a dread of the sufferings it will give rise to."

(B) THE KNOWABLE

Recapitulation.—Be it reiterated that consciousness is the only possible Basis and Criterion of our knowledge. In all thought this basis and criterion (a consciousness, a thinking subject) are presupposed. The interpretation which the thinking subject places upon itself and the Universe, the observations which it makes, and the cogitations which it draws from its own experiences,

make up the sum of science, or known truth—which has been defined as “the accordance of a cognition with its object.”¹

The opponents of Common Sense are wholly “in the air”; they have no *point d'appui*,—no fulcrum on which to pivot their lever. Nor is there any such fulcrum to be found outside of the Common Sense. This is absolute.

Just as a circus clown or acrobat cannot get on with his tricks and buffooneries without a basis of solid earth to perform upon, so even a clown or an acrobat in metaphysics or in any other kind of science, is unable to get on with his speculative buffooneries without presupposing the existence of the thinking subject together with the validity of the mental fact and law which his hypothesis denies. All these persons seem to be ignorant not only of their ignorance but of their knowledge. They are continually at war with their own natural and inexpugnable presuppositions.

The most sceptical philosopher in the world knows as well as any policeman, not to venture out into the streets without his breeches. He is as firmly convinced of the difference between a sound breakfast egg and a “political egg” as any cook that ever broiled over a grill. He cannot for the life of him imagine anything more absolutely *real* than either the political or the breakfast egg.

It is these anti-Common-Sense men of all schools who bring contempt and ridicule and neglect and defiance against philosophy and theology, and render them worse than barren. Pity it is, says Carlyle, that all metaphysics have “hitherto proved so inexpressibly unproductive. The secret of man’s being is still the Sphinx’s secret: a riddle that he cannot rede, and for ignorance of which he suffers death, the worst death, a spiritual.”² The great offence

¹ Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 50.

² *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. i. c. 8.

of the metaphysicians and theologians against sense and decency is that in their ignorance they are continually opposing themselves to, and trying to get behind or below Nature,—like the Indian geniuses who set the world upon the back of a great elephant, and stood the elephant upon the back of a great tortoise! True philosophy recognises no school but Nature; no teacher but the Common Sense of mankind. For example, “That which constitutes the reality of Mechanics is that the science is founded on some general facts furnished by observation, of which we can give no explanation whatever.”¹

Conformity with Nature is the test of truth.—Here let me make a protest against all system-building apart from Nature. All “systems” of philosophy opposed to fact may be forgotten with great advantage. The best parts even of many respectable writers are the detached strong and lucid thoughts which they utter in forgetfulness of their particular systems—the detached strong and lucid thoughts which they sometimes utter from their hearts in simple, spontaneous, loving sincerity. Many good men, even, go entirely wrong when they begin to build systems. The only system worth speaking about, is the system of Nature, which, I apprehend, will, in the last resort, be found to be the system of God. Let that alone be our system. Let us be anxious only to know what Nature says about things, and regard with contempt whatever any school may say about them in opposition to Nature. What Nature herself does say, must, in all conceivable cases, be the test of truth. Find out the last word that Nature utters on any subject, and you have sounded the depths of your knowledge concerning it.

¹ Comte: *Positive Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 107. It is a pity that he did not see the necessity of applying the same method to mental science. Herein lies the fatal weakness of Positivism: it neglects the first requisitions of Common Sense *concerning itself*—rejects the *most positive* of all intellectual demands—in short, commits dialectical and intellectual suicide.

The deliverances of consciousness might be more familiarly called the deliverances of Common Sense or the Dogmas of Nature. It is in vain to contend against any Dogma of Nature. Try, by way of experiment, to lift the chair in which you are sitting! It is feats of this kind that all the Futilitarian philosophers are continually trying to accomplish.

Common Sense is as necessary in the highest pursuits as in baking and brewing.—We demand Common Sense (as we have already seen) from every man *quoad* his particular secular calling—hair-cutting, shaving, tooth-drawing, knife-grinding, engine-driving, road-mending, baking and brewing or whatever kind of business it may be. If he fail in Common Sense, woe to his prospects as a man of business! This is an indubitable fact: no flight of fancy. On what principle, then, are we to absolve philosophers and theologians from the same demand? They cannot be absolved. Such a proposal were utterly absurd. The more sacred the work in hand, the more imperative must be our demand for Common-Sense treatment. Even in crossing a narrow ferry, most persons prefer a sound boat. When they go upon the great Deep, they demand the stoutest timbers.

Romanist antipathy to Common Sense.—But what do some of our ecclesiastical brethren say? Actually as follows:—"Never trust yourself to criticise Catholic religious practices or habits at home or abroad," etc.¹ Never

¹ Mr. Serjeant Bellasis in "Advice to Children," *Memorials*, p. 133. In his essay *On Liberty*, Mr. Mill admirably observes that by following the customary, "the mind itself is bowed to the yoke: even in what people do for pleasure, conformity is the first thing thought of; they like in crowds; they exercise choice only among things commonly done. Peculiarity of taste, eccentricity of conduct, are shunned equally with crimes, until by dint of not following their own nature, they have no nature to follow." P. 36. Such, too, is the long comedy or, rather tragedy of the schools. See a most suggestive article on the *Disadvantages of Education*, by Otto Eltzbacher in the *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1903, pp. 316, 317, 321, 322. Of course he means ignorant education.

criticise! As long as the Romanist stands behind this barrier, he must remain impregnable against the assaults of Common Sense. What advice could Satan give, even to children, more suited to advance his own purposes? The advice of the man who rationally believes in his doctrine should rather be—"criticise it to the very best of your ability." All wisdom, all goodness, invites the closest scrutiny, the keenest criticism; conscious that the more keenly it is regarded, the more beautiful will it appear. It is only the frail, the ugly and the evil that are anxious to escape criticism. "We shall admit no parley," says Mowbray to Westmoreland in the play. The latter replies—

"That argues but the shame of your offence;
A rotten case abides no handling."

This explains much of the ecclesiastical fear of criticism. It goes against their passions, their superstitions, their vested interests. They are always glad enough to make use of it when it suits their particular purposes.

Let this fact then be duly noted and appraised, that whilst the theologians and philosophers themselves are mighty careful not to commit their own vulgar bodies to the keeping and regimen of persons possessed of no common sense, we yet find them demanding that we shall surrender our intelligence to doctrines opposed to Common Sense, and commit the care of our minds to the nurture of persons possessed of no Common Sense. Their audacity is at once amazing and ridiculous. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but the philosopher too frequently does not recognise, the parson too frequently does not consider, the demands of Common Sense.

Absurdity is nothing but opposition to Common Sense.—It should also be noted that absurdity itself is neither more nor less than contrariety to, or disagreement with, the deliverances of Common Sense. The obvious and

indisputable is that which immediately commends itself to Common Sense. The sublimest truths and facts of Life and Death come under the cognisance of Common Sense. It needs not a Newton to apprehend the loftiest and most soul-moving principles revealed to human experience.

Persons to whom opprobrious terms are commonly applied.

—To whom is the term “fool” commonly applied? By universal consent, practically, it is applied to the person at war with Common Sense either in speech or conduct. The same remark applies to the use of its various synonyms—ass, dolt, dunce, dullard, canary-top, merryman, goose, suckling, weakling, pudding-head. All these are terms daily applied to persons speaking and acting in contravention of candles and Common Sense.

The fatuous is that which is opposed to Common Sense. The more you oppose yourself to Common Sense the more fatuous do you become. Alas, that so many philosophers and theologians should cultivate sheer fatuity!

As surely as Common Sense is the grand faculty or power by which we gauge the long and the short, the broad and the narrow, so surely is it the power or faculty by which we can tell the good and holy, or the vile and base.

The known, as we have seen, is that which is already within the grip of consciousness, or Common Sense. The knowable is that which may be brought within the grasp of the same faculties. We have looked at the known. Let us now very briefly consider the knowable.

1. *The Knowable in Zoology.*—In zoology, for example, nobody thinks we have yet seen all the animals on the face of the earth, nor all the animals in the sea. Explorers and adventurers are continually adding to the numbers in both elements. The day may come when we shall see a stuffed sea-serpent. Microbes, hitherto unknown, are being frequently brought to the Bar of Public Opinion. Some of fell activity have been caught and treated according to their deserts. Many able men

are in determined and stern pursuit of other microbes yet uncaught; and we wish them the most abundant success in their hunt. The Nimrod who pursues microbes would be justified in saying, as Cyrus, on one occasion, is reported to have said—"Friends, our hunt, if the gods please, will be a noble one." Shooting polar bears may be of no importance as compared with the pursuit of microbes, either in fluids or solids.

A great deal more than has been discovered may yet be known as to the features, nature, habitat and habits of many animals. Able workers are continually engaged in this field. As a result of such labours, it is quite conceivable that further classifications, or modifications of existing classifications, may be found necessary.

In physiology much has already been found out not only as to the existence, but as to the proximate causes of many activities, *e.g.* the circulation of the blood. So far as the present doctrine goes, it seems to be admirable and convincing; but it is quite possible that by further careful investigation and observation, physiologists may add to the information already obtained on that subject. Again, it seems, they have obtained much curious and highly interesting information regarding the nervous system. They tell us, for instance, that the brain is furnished with what they discriminate as influential and automatic arcs; that these have, respectively, centrifugal and centripetal fibres which converge to sensory ganglia or nerve centres. They further tell us that "beyond question" the automatic nerve arcs can display no action of themselves,—that in themselves they are absolutely inert, and require an external agent to set them in motion—an agent as external as sound is to the ear; and that these automatic arcs can be moved by an electrical stimulus. It is otherwise, apparently, with the influential arcs (which are to be found in the frontal lobes, wherein they localise the seat of intellect), upon which, they say,

electrical stimulus produces no motion.¹ Now, assuming these statements to be correct, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that physiologists may yet be able to localise, more or less accurately, the nerve centres of the various corporeal senses. It is said that "all muscular contraction is dependent on the agency of one set of nerves, all feeling of muscular contraction on another"; that "from the exclusive paralysis of the former, or the exclusive stupor of the latter, the one function may remain entire whilst the other is abolished."² Again, there is no reason why great advances should not be made in pathological and medical science; no reason in the nature of things why, for instance, the cause and the cure of consumption should not be found out; or of cancer; or of many other diseases both of man and beast.

2. *The Knowable in Botany.*—So, in Botany. There is no reason whatever why knowledge should not be greatly increased in every department of that science.

3. *The Knowable in Chemistry.*—So, in Chemistry. In early ages, as everybody knows, very few elements were discriminated. Gradually the list of elements has been increased. It is now swelled, I suppose, to between sixty and seventy,—the latest addition, I believe, being argon;³ which is now discovered to be a constituent part of the atmosphere. I understand, however, that to this date, its functions have not been discovered; hence the name argon, signifying the lazy, the nothing-doing, the functionless. Now all this is but provisional. Further knowledge may, quite conceivably, be acquired regarding this element, and it may be found to perform very important functions, though these are at present unknown. Indeed chemical science at large, may almost be regarded as provisional. It only deals with contingent truth, as we shall

¹ Cook : *Monday Lectures* (2nd Series), pp. 40-9.

² Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 865, note.

³ Written some years ago.

see further on ; and it is therefore subject to extension and re-statement by further discoveries. Contingent Truth—

“Is but a titular princess whose authority
Is always under age and in minority”;

but so far as knowledge goes, she is perfectly reliable in her language,—never a frivolous or capricious princess, saying one thing to-day and another to-morrow ; never telling lies at all, but frequently very reticent ; and only revealing her secrets gradually to very earnest and attentive inquirers.

As with chemistry, so it may be with many other sciences ; so with history which remains subject to additions and corrections ; so with a very large part of human knowledge in general. Indeed it is not unreasonable to think that the whole range of human knowledge¹ may be widened ; that much of what is now only *knowable*, may in the future become *known*.

(C) THE UNKNOWABLE THROUGH INACCESSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE

Let us now consider our position with regard to what I have discriminated as the unknowable from inaccessibility of evidence. In many regions of inquiry we find ourselves in this plight. Take the question of animal instinct : what is the real Nature ? Is it intelligence ? Or is it a power which only accomplishes the work of intelligence in blindness and ignorance ?

1. *What is Instinct ?*—“Who taught the ant,” Bacon asks, “to bite every grain of corn that she burieth in her hill, lest it should take root and grow ?”² Unfortunately the Baron of Verulam’s “facts” are not always reliable things ; but if the ant does actually take the means which he

¹ Attempts have been made to classify “the whole range of human knowledge.” See the proceedings of the Bibliographical Conference at Brussels in 1895. *Athenaeum*, 7th Sept. 1895, p. 321.

² *Works (Adv. of Learning)*, vol. i. p. 134.

asserts that she takes to prevent the germination of her store corn, we are possessed of no sufficient data to say absolutely whether it is done through reason or instinct. All we can say is that it seems more reasonable—more consistent with the ways of the lower animals in general, to assign the operation to a blind, instinctive activity, than to the agency of contemplative and ratiocinative effort. But again, we have not sufficient evidence, and cannot possibly from the nature of the case, obtain sufficient evidence to warrant us in pronouncing dogmatically upon the subject. In these circumstances, all wise men will be contented, for the time being, to regard such amazing activities with plain wonder and delight, and to say that they are inexplicable simply, until they are in a position to obtain more conclusive evidence concerning their nature. All genuine men of science will follow this method. Any other method is only worthy of charlatans or of gentlemen with super-heated heads.

Chaffinches.—In the *Sunday Magazine* for 1878, the Rev. Dr. G. B. Wheeler discusses chaffinches and nest-building. He makes special mention of the observations of a Mr. Griffiths touching these birds. That gentleman, he says, found a chaffinch's nest built in the angle between the trunk of a fir tree and two smaller branches which shot out from it. In the construction of their nest, the birds had utilised a piece of thin whip-cord just as a very clever man would have done. They had passed the cord once round the two stems, had drawn them slightly together, and then interwoven the ends in the bottom of the nest. The author says—"I confess this is a wondrous instance of instinct or intelligence;"¹ which is all, indeed, that can be said about it.

A certain New Guinea bird.—Some years ago the *Gardener's Chronicle* gave a description of a bird which is not only an expert architect, building a nest like the

¹ *Sunday Magazine*, 1878, pp. 94-5.

Bower-bird of Australia, but also a gardener, laying out a garden in front of it. The description, it seems, was accompanied by illustrative woodcuts from an original sketch drawn on the spot by one Signor Beccari. The bird was said to be a native of New Guinea and made a nest "of the stems of an orchid. In front of the nest a dressed lawn of moss is found, on which the attentive husband places day by day for the delectation of his mate, flowers and fruits of bright colours and pleasing flavours."¹ The orchid, says the writer, "belongs to a hitherto unknown species of dendrobium," and is "described at length by Professor Reichenbach." If such things be true, Amadis of Gaul, Amadis of Greece, Florismart of Hyrcania, Palmerin of England and the Exploits of Esplandian—those favourites of Don Quixote, can recount nothing more chivalrous than the doings of this feathered biped. Perhaps the question remains to be answered as to whether Signor Beccari is a naturalist or a romanticist? But even assuming him to be a naturalist—assuming his account of this bird's doings to have been inspired by the *bare facts of the case alone*, we still remain in the dark as to the real nature of the faculty by which its highly ecstatic and chivalrous proceedings are dictated. Complete data are beyond our reach until the bird can speak to us for itself in language of intelligence. For the time being, we must remain ignorant as to whether the bird is really moved by instinct or intelligence.

Rooks.—Or take the following observations on rooks. Amongst the most conspicuous instances of their sagacity is their method of getting at mussels, which they cannot otherwise open than by taking them up to a considerable

¹ I am sorry that I cannot mention the paper from which this cutting was taken. It would be highly interesting to know a little more about so devoted and gentlemanly a bird. Perhaps some reader will oblige us. I have now found confirmation of the above particulars in Mr. A. E. Pratt's *Two Years among New Guinea Cannibals*, pp. 349-50.

height and dropping them on the rocks, when the fall breaks the shell, and the rook takes its dinner. Again "How 'long-learned' in their ways these rooks are, to be sure. We once stuck a large branch of fir into the grass in front of our house—about six yards from it, and on it was hung, at the height of four feet from the ground, pieces of suet at the end of a string about two feet long, to feed the small birds. The suet could only be got at by the tits as they hung on it by their claws and pecked away to their hearts' content. Black-birds, however, could only make a dart at it on the wing, and robins also; but a rook would settle on the branch to which the string was fastened, and reaching down as far as he could, would draw a part of the string up with his beak and, putting it under his foot, hold it fast, draw up again some more, secure it again, and so on until he got the suet in his mouth, and taking it out of the string was off with it." ¹

Spiders.—Equally interesting observations have been made regarding spiders. Some years ago, Dr. J. Laurence Hamilton wrote to the public Press from 34 Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park, as follows:—"The following incident which I witnessed may possibly interest some of your readers. A boy removed a small spider to place it in the centre of a big spider's web, which was hung amid foliage and distant some four feet from the ground. The larger animal soon rushed from its hiding-place under a leaf to attack the intruder, who ran up one of the ascending lines by which the web was secured. The big insect gained rapidly upon its desired prey, the smaller creature. When the little spider was barely an inch in advance of its pursuer, the smaller spider cut with one of its posterior legs the line behind itself, so that the stronger insect fell to the ground; thus affording time and opportunity for the diminutive spider to escape along

¹ J. G. Sowerby: *Rooks and their Neighbours*, pp. 128-35.

the ascending rope of the web." A human general retreating before superior forces could scarcely do better than break down the bridges in his rear—practically, what the small spider did. "This is not the only fact," adds Dr. Hamilton, "which seems to indicate that a spider's instinct may almost equal reason." Just so: but the question remains, and must remain (I am afraid) unanswered—Is it instinct *or* reason?

Dogs.—The well-known spectroscopist and astronomer, Dr. Huggins, had a very fine mastiff, appropriately named Kepler. "This dog possessed many rare gifts, which had secured for him the admiration and regard of a large number of scientific acquaintances. At the close of luncheon or dinner, Kepler used to march gravely and sedately into the room, and set himself down at his master's feet. Dr. Huggins then propounded to him a series of arithmetical questions which the dog invariably solved without a mistake. Square roots were extracted off-hand with the utmost promptness. If asked what was the square root of 9, Kepler replied by 3 barks; or if the question were the square root of 16, by 4. Then various questions followed in which more complicated processes were involved, such, for instance, as 'add 7 to 8, divide the sum by 3, and multiply by 2.' To such a question as that, Kepler gave more consideration, and sometimes hesitated in making up his mind as to where his barks ought finally to stop. Still, in the end, his decision was always right. The reward for each correct answer was a piece of cake which was held before him during the exercise; but until the solution was arrived at, Kepler never moved his eye from his master's face. The instant the last bark was given, he transferred his attention to the cake." Such feats certainly seem to be accomplished by reason, but the proof is far from being complete.¹

¹ Lubbock refers to this case in *The Senses, Intellect, etc., of Animals*, pp. 284, 285.

Horses.—In his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, Hallam gives the following extraordinary account of a horse which belonged to Febretti, the Antiquarian. "The Glory of Febretti," he says, "must be partly shared with his horse. This wise and faithful animal, named Marco Polo, had acquired, it is said, the habit of standing still, and, as it were, *pointing*, when he came near an antiquity; his master candidly owning that several things which would have escaped him, had been detected by the antiquarian quadruped"¹—clearly an animal worth having! This equine Marco Polo ought certainly to have been made a fellow of any Antiquarian Society that may have existed in those days. As to the Literature of fiction, there is no end, of course, to the stories illustrative, or designed to be illustrative of animal intelligence,—as, for example, in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, where the horse Bayardo, mounted by Sacripant, will not charge at his rightful master, Rinaldo.²

Bees.—In his *Life of the Bee*, M. Maeterlinck records an experiment of inserting a piece of tin plate into a comb in which the bees were storing their honey. "Some drops of honey," he says, "having been placed in two of these cells (constructed on the plate), the bees discovered on tasting it that the contact of the metal had a deteriorating effect," and thereupon, "they reconsidered the matter and covered over with wax the entire surface of the tin."³ This certainly looked like an intellectual operation. In the same book, he says, "Transport our black bee to California or Australia and her habits will completely alter. Finding that summer is perpetual and flowers for ever abundant, she will, after one or two years, be content to live from day to day, and gather only sufficient honey and pollen for the day's consumption; and her thoughtful observation of

¹ Vol. iv. p. 118.

² *Orlando Furioso*, ii. 6-8.

³ *The Life of the Bee*, pp. 163-6.

these new features triumphing over hereditary experience, she will cease to make provision for the winter.”¹ In short, he identifies instinct with intellect, declaring that of all the inhabitants of this globe, the hymenoptera “possess the highest degree of intellect after man”:² in which statement, however, I am afraid that he begs the whole question.

However, such wonderful things seem to be done by some of the lower animals that we are sometimes fain to think that they are possessed of some higher faculty than that of blind instinct. So strongly does Lord Herbert of Cherbury seem to have been impressed with this view of the case, that he is reported to have regarded the religious faculty as constituting the specific difference between man and the lower animals; and John Wesley entertained the same notion.³

The Migrations of Birds.—We must not forget, however, the marvellous facts which tell a wholly different tale. It had been assumed, for example, by many naturalists, that in their migratory movements, the old birds led the way, but the great Heligoland Naturalist, Herr Gätke, holds that this conclusion is wrong, and proves that, with most species, the earliest migrants are the young. “Expressed in the simplest language,” says he, “the incontestable result of all the numerous phenomena as they come under notice here is as follows:—(1) that under normal conditions, in the case of the 396 species occurring here, with the exception of a single one, the autumn migration is initiated by the young birds, from about six to eight weeks after leaving their nests; (2) that the parents of these young in-

¹ *The Life of the Bee*, p. 313. It would be interesting to learn what alteration, if any, is produced by this change of life in the organisation of the bee.

² *Ib.* p. 27. If this statement is correct, it will show that mere size of brain is no gauge of either “intellect” or “instinct.”

³ Hallam: *Introduction*, etc., vol. iii. p. 161.

dividuals do not follow till one or two months later; and (3) that of these old birds again, the most handsome old males are the last to set out on the migratory journey. In spring this order of succession is inverted.”¹ In the autumn migration, young golden plovers arrive at Heligoland as early as the beginning of July. “None of these flights of young birds are accompanied by old individuals. Old golden plovers do not arrive until October.” As to blackbirds, “the young reddish-brown birds with which the migration commences, rarely make their appearance before the middle of October; the old black males defer their arrival until November; and of these latter again, the last to arrive, some weeks later, are the beautiful, glossy black individuals, with orange-yellow bills.”²

The theory of inherited experience seems to be mere gibberish.—Such wonders as these, are attributed by evolutionists to what they call “hereditary experience,” but I am afraid that this phrase must be taken for mere gibberish—a screen for utter ignorance. As Gätke aptly queries, “Can experience be something of which the subject is altogether unconscious? And further, can experience, of which the result is positive knowledge, be actually inherited?”³ “How could the old birds impart their own migratory experiences to their offspring except by practical instruction and guidance while travelling in their company?”⁴ I apprehend that our ingenious evolutionary friends will not be able to climb over this fence.

It has been suggested that cold and lack of food determine such migrations, but neither is this theory of

¹ *Heligoland as an Ornithological Observatory*, pp. 100–102.

² *Ib.* pp. 105–6.

³ *Ib.* p. 132.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 137. With his prodigious enthusiasm for evolutionary fignent, Mr. Clodd writes—“The bird makes its nest or migrates from one zone to another, by an unvarying route, even *leaving its young behind to perish.*” *The Story of Creation*, pp. 208–9.

any use. "In the case of the starling, the young birds which migrate at the end of June, are not followed by the parents until the end of September. Now in this case, scarcity of food can hardly have been the cause for the departure of the young birds, since there must have been a sufficient supply to enable the old birds to remain three months longer. Nor can we lay down this earlier departure to the influence of cold; for, as a rule, a rise rather than a fall of temperature takes place in the months succeeding June":¹ therefore with regard to the actual *cur res sit* of the migrations of birds, wise men will find themselves under the masterful necessity of confessing complete ignorance.

So with regard to the migrations of other animals.—They are in the same plight regarding these amazing movements amongst other animals. Herr Gätke learns from his brother that it is quite common in Texas "for cattle which have been driven 200 miles out into the country to return to their native home across pathless tracts and forests"²—which, of course, neither they nor their ancestors ever saw before. I am assured by a Canadian friend, that horses show similar instincts on the Canadian ranches.

Still more amazing, if possible, are the migrations of beetles and nocturnal lepidoptera. Among the latter, "*Plusiagamma* travel from Slesvick-Holstein to England across the North Sea. They pass this island (Heligoland) in enormous swarms, resembling, as seen from the lighthouse, a dense snowstorm driven by a light breeze. Thus on the night 15th and 16th August 1882, with a very light south wind,—from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. millions of *Plusiagamma* were travelling from east to west like a dense snowstorm. . . . Now it is quite impossible that these moths should be able to collect experiences of any kind during this single migration of their life; which, moreover, is performed in

¹ *Heligoland as an Ornithological Observatory*, p. 145.

² *Ib.* p. 139.

the darkness of night across a wide expanse of water ; and even, if they did, these would be perfectly useless, for these migrants die shortly after their autumn migration without having produced further offspring to which they could commit their experiences, either by hereditary transmission or by personal instruction." He regards the whole operation "as a means to an end of an instinctive and unconscious agency." ¹ Such facts as he adduces, should despatch enormous quantities of biological and evolutionary literature to the general Rubbish-Shoot.

And also nomadic tribes.—So also with regard to the wandering tribes of the human race. Herr Gätke records a traveller's interesting experiences among the Samoyedes :—"Overjoyed at having at last discovered in these men, my interpreters of that great mystery of nature, the capacity of orientation possessed by animals, I endeavoured to draw out from them the secret of their art and pressed them on every possible opportunity. They, however, only looked at me in a stupefied manner, were surprised at my astonishment, and supposed that that was an ordinary everyday occurrence and self-evident ; whereas, on the other hand, our inability of finding our way seemed to them quite incomprehensible. At last they completely disarmed me by the question, 'Well, and how is it that the little arctic fox finds her way on the great tundra without ever going astray ?' . . . In one case which he considered doubtful, von Middendorff insisted on following his compass, but very soon made 'the highly surprising discovery that his compass, and not the directive sense of the Samoyedes, had deceived him.' . . . Hence the Samoyedes too, wandered in the right track without being able to give a reason for doing so ; or, in other words, they were led by instinct." ²

The evolutionary theory of instinct, an idle tale.—Thus it appears that we cannot come to any positive conclusion

¹ *Heligoland as an Ornithological Observatory*, pp. 137-9.

² *Ib.* p. 134.

touching the real nature of instinct, the data obtainable being so hopelessly insufficient and even contradictory, as to render such a conclusion unwarrantable. Indeed it would appear that there is no way of settling this question until we can enter into articulate converse with the lower animals, or be furnished with the power of participating in their actual consciousness. It is therefore one of these innumerable questions which we shall do well to leave alone—one belonging to the domain of a wise agnosticism. The only certain conclusion to be drawn from the wonderful facts by which we are confronted is that the evolutionary theory of instinct is an idle tale.

Or how are we to account, say, for the hunger-enduring capabilities of some animals? Why should a spider be able to fast for a year, a toad for fourteen months, a beetle for three years?¹—whilst other animals will scarcely survive as many days. “Inherited tendency” of some kind?—A mere cloak for ignorance.

An evolutionary assumption.—With regard to the evolution hypothesis as a whole, Mr. Clodd actually assumes that “the function creates the organ”²—not merely that the exercise of the function *improves* the organ, which is rational and true, but actually that “the function *creates* the organ.” Now, compared to this inversion of Common Sense, the putting of the cart before the horse is quite a venial and pleasant little error; for in the latter case, the noble quadruped might, for a change, be induced to push the cart instead of hauling it; but when a man gravely assures you, or assumes that “the function creates the organ”—in other words, that sight *creates* the eye; walking, the feet; food, the digestive organs—! He who speaks thus, disqualifies himself as a scientific witness.

¹ Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, vol. i., note, p. 186.

² *The Story of Creation*, p. 73. This dogma, however, he contradicts, happily, in the same book—“the organs exist for the work which they have to do, not the work for the organs.” P. 178.

His mind regarding such questions, seems to be in a "primordial, nebulous, non-luminous state." It is alarming to have "teachers," "scientists," "savants" of this kind let loose amongst simple people.

2. *The Unknowable touching Eggs*.—Again, why should a fully organised, common hen's egg carefully sat upon for three weeks by a common hen, bring forth a chicken? Nobody can tell us anything about it beyond the well-known facts of the case. No man can enter into the critical "why"? of the business at all. The keenest biologist is, essentially, as ignorant about it as the veriest Hodge. Let one domestic hen's egg be placed in the centre of a large table, and let all the philosophers in the world be comfortably seated round about it, and the most philosophical thing that the assembled philosophers could do concerning it, would be—simply to gaze at the egg with intelligent, but speechless, wonder. *Why* should that egg possess the potentiality of yielding a chicken? The thing is as inscrutable as Orion or the Pleiades. On such an occasion, devout silence would be more instructive than a thousand orations upon Eggs. And yet some people go swaggering about as if the Universe were too small for them!

The Origin of Eggs?—Then as to the familiar question, the first origin of eggs! Did the egg precede the hen, or the hen, the egg? Here is a question to make even the toughest metaphysical or biological brain dizzy. I always think it argues great intellectual power and great wisdom in a philosopher, when he knows at what point to stop speaking, or even thinking—at what point to let his mind rise into an attitude of reverent wonder. If our savants would but generally adopt this most rational attitude, what a deliverance it would be to us all, in the matter of books! This, the terrestrial origin and the fecundity of eggs, though they can be bought at one shilling per dozen, is one of those questions most fit to call forth silence and wonder.

The common hen's egg remains to this day as inscrutable in its first origin and fecundity—as wonderful almost, as the Universe—the universal Egg.

Then even as to the origin of the first hen *as domestic* : who caught and tamed the first one ? How comes it to-day, to be substantially the same kind of fowl from China to Peru ? It is ignorance, for the most part, that loads our bookshelves—not knowledge.

It is a great pity but the intellectual health of the philosopher could be ascertained by an examination of his tongue. If this could be done, we should frequently find it indicating a bad state of mental dyspepsia.

3. *The Unknowable in Vegetation.*—If we turn to such a question as to the “why” of vegetation, we are equally ill off for an answer. Why should a young tree planted appropriately in the ground take root and grow ? Why should wheat sown in certain well-known circumstances, germinate, grow up, and reproduce itself ? Why such incalculable fecundity and variety in Nature at large ? We really know almost nothing about it but the facts of germination, etc., and their manner, and the conditions under which such processes will take place. In such processes, it need scarcely be said that we do not apprehend the real nature, the *cur res sit*, of germination and growth.

Why should an acorn fitly planted and tended, produce an oak tree ? *Cur res sit* ? Nature furnishes us with no information on the subject, beyond the facts of the case.

4. *Origins in general.*—But not only do some of the philosophers try to account for the origin of eggs ; they want to account for the origin of everything. “The essential function of science,” they tell us,—without any trace of a redeeming smile on their countenance, such as one finds on that of Sir John Maundevile, “the essential function of science is to reduce apparently disparate phenomena to the expression of a single law.” Why they should have taken “a single law” so much to heart,

I do not know; but it appears to me that it would not be a bad plan for them to find out how many, and what kind of, laws are actually in operation round about us and within us, before starting to reduce them to unity. That single law, they tell us, is to be found in what they call the "Law of Evolution": namely, that fleas and elephants, monkeys and men are all descended from the same original parent. This is the high-water mark of nineteenth-century biology. (How it must grieve Father Adam!) Man is not and was not made in the likeness of God at all: our ancestor was probably a hideous kind of fish. We, at present, are just undergoing the process of losing our tails. (How it must disgust Mother Eve!) Nay, Dohrn, I find, thinks that we must seek the clue to our ancestry in "chaetopod worms."¹ Such is the summit of our present scientific wisdom and understanding. Darkness and dunghills!

The following colloquy is to be found in Aristophanes:—

"Phidippides. I will not injure my teachers.

Strepsiades. Yes, yes, reverence paternal Jove.

Phidippides. Paternal Jove! How antiquated you are! Why, is there any Jove?

Strepsiades. There is.

Phidippides. There is not, no; for Vortex reigns, having expelled Jupiter."

I am afraid that Vortex is supposed by some to be still reigning.

The "Generalised Ancestor."—Just notice, in passing, how infinitely more difficult it is to suppose a common or "generalised ancestor" for the flea and the elephant than to suppose simply, that the elephant began its terrestrial existence as an elephantine beast, and the flea as a pulcious; that the flea's terrestrial parent was originally a flea, or very flea-like; that the elephant's, was an elephant, or very elephantine. A "generalised ancestor," indeed! It

¹ *Athenaeum*, 1889, vol. i. p. 47.

appears to me that the evolutionists are engaged in something much wilder than a wild-goose chase, for the wild-goose may be caught, but the "generalised ancestor"!¹ Such attempts should long ere this date, have been as obsolete as crusading.

Nothing known about natural Origins.—Indeed we shall probably do well to leave all questions touching the origin of things in Nature to the rash and hot-headed members of society. All that the self-possessed and intelligent man knows about "origins" is that nobody knows anything about them—not even of acorns or eggs, nuts or nutmegs. Nay, even with regard to the racial origins of some existing nations—even our own, the only certain point is that our knowledge concerning such "origins" is extremely defective. The continual falling of the seed into the ground, or the grass continually growing out of it; the laying of any egg, or the hatching of it, remains up to this late date in the nineteenth century²—even after thousands of evolutionary philosophers have pondered on the subject all their lives, absolutely inscrutable as to its real aetiology. This is the present state of the case both as to eggs and acorns. The *rem esse* is plainly before us; the *cur res sit* remains shrouded, for the present, in impenetrable darkness. If philosophers would steadily remember this truth, it would bring enormous accessions of scientific wisdom to the world. In any case it seems to be but an act of pretentious ignorance to assume that the theory of biological evolution is "scientific."

Different kinds of ignorance.—A word here on the subject of ignorance. It should be recognised that there

¹ Speaking about geese, it is stated that in the Museum at Boolak is "a fragmentary fresco taken from a tomb at Maydoom, dating from some 3000 years B.C., in which three species of geese are depicted with such accuracy that two of them can easily be identified." *Athenaeum*, 1885, vol. i. p. 626. However, I find that to talk to the evolutionist about mere thousands of years, is as if one were to say "five minutes ago."

² 13th February 1896.

are different kinds of ignorance. In the first place there is honest ignorance arising from the natural weakness of our faculties and the remoteness of scientific data. In the second place, there is dishonest ignorance (dishonesty arising from different motives), which pretends to know what it does not know; to see what it does not see. Sometimes we have a medical man, say, boldly and unblushingly prescribing for a patient although ignorant of his malady. This is the quack, the dishonest, ignorant person. On the other hand, we have the upright medical man who is prepared to say whenever necessary—"This case baffles me; I must consult with some other fellow about it." Nothing shameful here. It is a confession of honest ignorance. So, in all other matters. Honest ignorance recognising its ignorance, need not be ashamed. We are all terribly ignorant. Our best knowledge only touches, as it were, the fringes of the Universe. It is only dishonest ignorance (ignorance which pretends to know) or ignorant ignorance (which knows not that it is ignorant), that is shameful and hateful.

Montaigne on ignorance.—There is a notable passage in Montaigne on this subject. "Whoever will be cured of ignorance must confess it. Iris is the daughter of Thaumantis. Admiration (*i.e.* wonder) is the foundation of all philosophy, Inquiry the progress, and Ignorance the end. Nay in truth there is a sort of Ignorance, strong and generous, that yields nothing in honour and courage to knowledge; an Ignorance of which to conceive, requires no less knowledge than to conceive of knowledge itself. . . . Let us take up some form of arrest which says—*the Court understands nothing of the matter*, more freely and ingenuously than the Areopagites did, who finding themselves perplexed with a cause they could not unravel, ordered the parties to appear again after a hundred years."¹ The attaining of this knowledge of our ignorance

¹ *Essays*, vol. iii. pp. 324-5.

is indeed a necessary step in the acquisition of knowledge, and can scarcely be too much insisted on.

5. *The Unknowable in Life and Death*.—What, again, does anybody know of the real nature of Life and Death—these immense facts of daily experience? Almost nothing but the dread facts themselves. The “why” of them is almost wholly hidden from our view. It may not be so for ever. The time is approaching, perhaps, when we may become acquainted more fully with the proximate causes of vital efficiency, as we are at present acquainted with some of the proximate causes of mechanical efficiency; but that time is not yet. At present we do not even know proximately *why* our blood is warm (*cur res sit*?). We are only acquainted with the fact (*rem esse*). What do we know of the real nature of organic growth, or organic decay? Organic accumulation of matter? Cellular growth? How comes it about? Very wonderful all, but quite inscrutable. Decay—chemical metamorphosis and dispersal of matter and bacterial ravages, we are also acquainted with; but as to the real *cur res sit* of such processes? . . . The prudent man can say nothing about it: he can only wonder. Then after disease has proceeded a certain length. . . ?

What is the use, for example, of a lucubration like the following?—“To him who has learned to consider bodies as what they truly are, *a multitude of separate and independent corpuscles*, there is no change of identity, and cannot be any change of identity, in all the phenomena or changes of the Universe. The atoms which alone existed continue as before; and all which constitutes the phenomena, or variations of successive phenomena, is a change of their place or tendency.”¹ What is this but ignorance deceiv-

¹ Brown: *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. i. p. 293. Comte writes that the so-called explanations of colour—the “supposed faculty of reflecting or transmitting such and such a kind of rays, or of exciting such and such an order of ethereal vibrations, in virtue of certain supposed arrangements

ing itself with words—words with a kind of learned clang about them? What does anybody know of the alleged “multitude of independent and separate corpuscles”? Nothing, of course. Who is to give us any warranty of their existence, even? Nobody. Therefore the more of that kind of scientising, the worse; the less, the better. If Knowledge and Wisdom alone, wrote books!

It is by no means easy to get at truth always; but it is surely remarkably easy to be quite silent about what you don't know; or to be contented to ask modest questions about it. The general observation, *in practice*, of this one rule of philosophic caution, would subvert Babel.

6. *The Unknowable in Mental Processes*.—Briefly view the same fact, the limitation of our knowledge, in connection with mental processes. “Every effect is only produced by the concurrence of at least two causes (and by cause, be it observed, I mean everything without which the effect could not be realised), and as these concurring and co-efficient causes, in fact, constitute the effect, it follows that the lower we descend in the series of causes, the more complex will be the product; and that the higher we ascend it will be more simple.”¹ Let us try to ascend a bit. For example, visual perception is the result of various known causes and conditions: (1) We require a being possessed of visual organs; (2) he must use these organs; (3) to see, he requires the aid of light, and (4) the existence of an external visual object in a certain position relative to the organs. So far we can go. In the circumstances indicated, we can see. This is the fact. *Cur res sit?* For centuries and centuries, philosophers have tried to answer the question, and have invented

of the molecules, are more difficult to conceive than the fact itself, and are in truth as absurd as the explanations that Molière puts into the mouth of his metaphysical doctors.” *Positive Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 271 (Martineau's tr.).

¹ Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 59. He is, of course, speaking of proximate or secondary causes.

cartloads of theories to account for this fact of vision, but absolutely in vain. They know as little about it to-day, as when they began the speculation. All that they or we know about it down to this date, is the fact that, in the circumstances stated, we do actually see. Even Hume allows this:—"As to those impressions which arise from the senses, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason; and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the Author of our being."¹ All we know about it, as I have said, is that we do actually see. Now, how is this? The right answer, I think, is that the inquiry touches a subject beyond our reach. To this day we know practically nothing of the nature of the ego,—the self within us,—the seeing subject. Our powers of self-observation do not sink so deep. Beyond noting the amazing organisation of the material eye, and tracing the laws of visual perception as revealed to us in experience, we can discover no sufficient data, no facts, upon which to make induction and conclusion as to the veritable "why" of seeing; and until some such further data can be discovered, we are absolutely unable to carry our science of perception any higher. We are simply brought to a standstill when we arrive at the facts given us in our inner consciousness. It is to be noticed, however, that although in our present state of being, we are

¹ *Treatise of Human Nature* (Reference lost).—Amongst later writers, Mr. Herbert Spencer's huge volumes throw no additional light whatever on the problem of perception. Mr. Mivart happily says—"The intellect apprehends through sense what is beyond sense." *Nature and Thought*, p. 205. M'Cosh notes—"Reid and Stewart are ever telling us that they have obtained only partial glimpses of truth. . . . All the great masters of the (Scottish) School not only admit but are at pains to show that there are mysteries in the mind of man and in every department of human speculation, which they cannot clear up." *Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 10-11.

absolutely frustrated in our attempts to obtain any articulate knowledge of the "why" of visual perception, it is not inconceivable that we might have been endowed with higher powers through which we might have obtained such knowledge, or carried it upwards at all events; and it is quite conceivable that in a future state of existence—of which I joyfully think there are strong indications, we may be furnished with this higher knowledge, or indeed with those higher powers. "Now we see as through a glass, darkly"; now we do but know in part. Later, the Apostle thinks, we shall have a clearer view of things—which seems to be a very reasonable anticipation.

So with sonal perception; or sapid perception; or odorous or tactile perception. In no case can we get much beyond the facts of consciousness; in no case can we give any adequate explanation of these facts. All offered explanations seem to be so many vexing but ludicrous proofs of human ignorance or presumption. The men who attempt to furnish us with such explanations, beyond tracing *the laws* of our sensations and perceptions, appear to be as fatuously engaged as the drunkard who attempted to pull the moon out of the ditch. It would be of infinite advantage to Science if all the Schools would religiously observe these truths.

Dr. Hook's theory of ideas.—Take Dr. Robert Hook's theory of ideas. He assumes them to be "material substance; and thinks that the brain is furnished with a proper kind of matter for fabricating the ideas of each sense. The ideas of sight, he thinks, are formed of a kind of matter resembling the Bononian Stone, or some kind of phosphorus; that the ideas of sound are formed of some matter resembling the chords or glasses which take a sound from the vibrations of the air; and so of the rest.

"The soul, he thinks, may fabricate some hundreds of those (so-called) ideas in a day; and that as they are

formed, they are pushed further from the centre of the brain where the soul resides. By this means they make a continuous chain of ideas coiled up in the brain, the first end of which is furthest removed from the centre or seat of the soul; and the other end is always at the centre, being the last idea formed, which is always the present moment when considered"; etc.¹

"What thought so wild, what airy dream so light
That will not prompt the theorist to write!"

This is a fair specimen of the innumerable nonsense-theories which have been propounded as to the mechanism of the mind. Obviously such persons would be much more at home with a tooting-ring or a child's rattle than with the problems of Psychology. Hook's theory is no sillier than the theories of the physiological psychologists of the present day.²

Inscrutable nature of Memory.—So, as to Memory. An act of memory requires, we know, a remembering subject—i.e. an ego, and a past experience; but how the ego gathers up the past experience into the present mnemonic act, no one can give us even the slightest information. Unfortunately, again, a large number of men are so wanting in perspicacity, or so dowered with rashness, as not to see this easily discerned truth; and they proceed to invent many hypotheses touching the causes of memory. There is the hypothesis that it is the result of permanent material impressions which have been made on the brain; another, that it is the result of permanent

¹ v. Reid's *Essays: Intellectual Powers*, ii. 9. Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 276.

² Take Mr. Clodd's theory:—"The psychologist may analyse and catalogue the operations of the mind, but the key to understanding them lies in the study of brain structure and function, of which the physiologist is master." *The Story of Creation*, p. 4. Mr. Clodd is continually drawing larger drafts, if possible, upon human credulity than the Church of Rome itself. Think of a physiologist discovering, say, the Ten Commandments in the convolutions of the brain!

dispositions in the nervous fibres to repeat the same oscillatory movement; another, that it is made up of particular organs which fulfil the different functions of memory; a fourth, that it springs from different parts of the brain as the repositories of the various classes of ideas; a fifth, that it springs from a particular fibre as the instrument of every sound notion.¹ It seems to be obvious at a glance that such hypotheses are nothing more than depressing monuments of the weakness of their inventors—of the weakness of men who have not known their own ignorance; for examine any one of them, and you can scarcely fail to see its fatuity. Assume “permanent impressions on the brain” to account for memory, and you are as far as ever from explaining the mnemonic fact. It might as well be said that a memorandum is the cause of memory, or that a staff is the cause of one’s perambulating powers; or that the possession of a spoon or a glass is the cause of eating and drinking. Or think of an “oscillatory fibrous movement” being dragged in to account for memory! As well bring in a grindstone. Indeed, such hypotheses should not be devised outside of lunatic institutions. If, as in the days of old, St. Fillan’s Well “could the crazed brain restore,” there should be a constant procession of speculators streaming towards it to drink of its miraculous waters. In another sphere of existence it is conceivable that we may be able to know a little more than we now know of the principles upon which the memory works. Here, we remain almost wholly ignorant of the nature of its operations, having no explicatory data to proceed upon, and knowing only, as an invincible fact, that we do indeed, or may, remember—as the case may be.

Inscrutable nature of the thinking faculty.—Or take the faculty of judgment. How are we to explain the mental act of comparison, of which we are all, more or

¹ Hamilton : *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 217.

less capable? What is the nature of the faculty which accomplishes the act? What is the substance of the faculty? What, its textural tissue? What, its structural plan? What is the textural tissue or nature of the thoughts, fancies, imaginations which it entertains, studies and compares? In face of such problems, what is the use of talking about "mental secretions," "mind-stuff" and so forth! Far better to have a plain and unpretentious talk about turnips. It is all Bedlam madness—worse than Bedlam madness; for we may speedily put the Bedlam man under restraint; whereas the Law,—that is to say, Human Law, cannot touch the more dangerous madman whose frenzy manifests itself in the decent apparel of science or philosophy. Behold then, the plain but inscrutable facts of the case. We actually know nothing of the substance of the comparative faculty: nothing of its organic structure; nothing of its textural tissue; nothing of the internal texture of the thoughts or imaginations upon which it works; nothing of the mechanism by which it accomplishes its work: nor are we the least likely, I fear, to know anything about them as long as our postal address is on this planet. At all events, the data of such a psychology are, at present, very far beyond our reach. Our psychology, it would appear, can take us no further back than the wondrous, but indubitable, facts of consciousness, wondrously combined and rooted in the human personality; and in respect of which matters, the man robed in academical costume knows nothing more than the college bottle-washer.

Inscrutable nature of the volitional faculty.—So, as to the faculty of volition. I "will" to do something within my power, *e.g.* to dip my pen into my ink-bottle. I do it. How is the thing done? How does the ego act upon what we may call the physical machine in which I live? Why should nerves, muscles, joints respond to the volition and

accomplish the act? We know absolutely nothing more about it than the fact that in normal circumstances, we can accomplish it. Further data are hopelessly beyond our reach. So with regard to all the great moral revelations set forth in our minds—the facts of moral consciousness. How they came there, we know not; how they operate, we know not; but there they are as facts, significant of Heaven, significant of—not of Heaven. If our psychological speculators had but recognised and respected even this one plain truth, namely, that the nature of the mental processes is, in our present circumstances, quite inscrutable, they would have rendered themselves a little more venerable than they are.

7. *Inscrutable nature of mind and matter generally.*—It is well to realise and confess the limitation of our knowledge. We are ever speaking of mind and matter: yet, as to their prime substance—what are they? As Pascal says, “We are unable to conceive what is mind; we are unable to conceive what is matter; still less are we able to conceive how they are united: yet this is our proper nature.”¹ So, Hume:—“Matter and spirit are at bottom equally known.”² So, Sir William Hamilton:—“In so far as matter is a name for something known, it means that which appears to us” (better, presents itself to us) “under the forms of extension, solidity, divisibility, figure, motion, roughness, smoothness, colour, heat, cold, etc.; in short it is a common name for a certain series, or aggregate, or complement, of appearances or phenomena”

¹ *Pensées*, 3. 26.

² *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 399. So Stewart,—“The circumstance which peculiarly characterises the inductive science of mind is that it professes to abstain from all speculation concerning its nature and essence, confining the attention entirely to phenomena.” *Life of Reid*, p. 71. And Brown to the same effect. “It may always be safely presumed that he knows least of mind who thinks that he knows its substance best.” *Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 193.

(better, facts and laws) "manifested in co-existence,"¹ but of matter as a primal entity (*materia prima*), we know absolutely nothing. The same as to the mind. We only know it in its manifestations; we are wholly ignorant of the intellectual entity. The substance of Peter Smith's actual personality is as inscrutable to us all, inclusive of Peter himself, as the dog-star; and, as we have already seen, the disparate nature of mind and matter can only be inferred from the disparate character of their manifestations.

"Who can in memory, or wit, or will,
Or (*i.e.* either) air, or earth, or fire, or water find?
What alchemist can draw with all his skill
The quintessence of these out of the mind?"²

No one: not even an alchemist; though whether spiritual or material, the facts are of the same importance. But whatever may be the actual *materia prima* of mind and matter respectively (a question as to which, I fear, we must be contented to remain intelligently ignorant), there can be no doubt that the characteristics and activities which they respectively manifest are wholly disparate. Thought magnificently transcends the little world of the corporeal senses. None of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of mind,³ and none of the

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 137. It is the particular merit of the "Scottish School" to have observed these facts. "Whatever minor or major differences there may be in the fulness of their exposition, or in the favourite views which they individually prefer, all who are truly of the Scottish School agree in maintaining that there are laws, principles or powers in the mind anterior to any reflex observation of them, and acting independently of the philosopher's classification or explanation of them. It refuses to admit any philosophic maxims except such laws or principles as can be shown by self-inspection to be in the very constitution of the mind." M'Cosh: *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 7.

² Sir John Davies: "Of the Soule of Man," *Poetical Works*, vol. i. pp. 39-40.

³ This is widely recognised; see, for example, Gibbon: *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 295. Mr. Clodd, however, knows all about it. "We began," says he, "with the primitive nebula, we end with the highest forms of con-

properties of mind will apply to the operations of matter.

Conclusion as to the Unknowable through inaccessibility of evidence.—It is then to be noted that multitudes of things are unknowable by us and likely to remain so, not necessarily from our intellectual incompetency, but by reason of the fact that no sufficiency of data are obtainable on which we might rise to the knowledge of such things. Nothing, I believe, will more readily contribute to the acquisition of real knowledge than to recognise, in the first place, the limits of the field in which knowledge is obtainable. It must clearly be to our advantage to confine our energies as closely as possible to the cultivation of that field, the knowable, vigorously restraining ourselves from wasting our faculties in mere conjectural labours. In all cases, the mind, as well as the body, requires a footing of fact to proceed upon—just as Archimedes required an extra-terrestrial fulcrum for the lever by which he was to move the world. The most magnificent of giants can do nothing but upon sound footing. Samson himself could not have carried away the Gates of Gaza—not even Delilah's hair-pins, but upon sound footing. What then shall the feeble, heavy person do, if deprived of such an advantage!

We cannot proceed but upon the Given.—Facts—things Given, are to the scientific mind what the rungs of a ladder, or the steps of a staircase, are to the human body. It can really make no ascent whatever but upon facts, and inductions made upon facts. Meanwhile, of course, it would be extremely silly—

“should witness man so much misween
That nothing is but that which he hath seen!”

sciousness; the story of creation is shown to be the unbroken record of the evolution of gas into genius.” *The Story of Creation*, p. 228. Mr. Clodd should sketch this “unbroken record of the evolution of gas into genius,” and send it to *Punch*. The unconscious comicality of this portentous philosopher's notions, is as funny as the funniest creations of conscious humour.

This, obviously, would be to reject the significance of the facts; although, as we have already recognised, their teaching is so powerful and convincing that we must accept their instruction. They are even charged with instruction touching the invisible—what eye hath not seen nor ear heard. What is now submitted is that we can know nothing and do nothing but upon a basis of facts—the Given;¹ and that much remains unknowable and, probably, must remain unknowable, because, with respect to it, we cannot obtain such a basis.

(D) THE MYSTERIOUS

We come now to speak of the mysterious. All consciousness is made up of experiences—experiences of a self and a Universe. Philosophy, regarded as knowledge, is nothing more nor less than the articulate interpretation of these experiences given us by consciousness through all its faculties and capacities. We have interpreted some of those experiences as implying an actual knowledge of certain things (things *known*); some of them as implying an obtainable knowledge of other things (the *knowable*); some of them as implying an unobtainable knowledge of a third set of objects (the unknowable from *inaccessibility of data*); and now we come to consider a fourth order of experiences, touching which we recognise a *positive inability to know or comprehend*, in which we clearly recognise the Mysterious,—the Infinite,—or that which the Finite recognises as fact, but is unable to comprehend, intellectually.

¹ Hegel, for example, failed to observe this fundamental truth. "It is not allowable in philosophy," says the unhappy man, "to make a beginning with 'There is, there are,' for in philosophy the object must not be presupposed." *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 89 (Eng. and For. Phil. Library). Thus at the very outset of his pilgrimage, he involves himself and his victims in an imbroglio of sheer stupidities and fatuities. No one of the thousand-fold industries and activities carried on by man, can be started even, but upon the basis of the presupposed,—the Given.

1. *In Space and Time*.—Try for example to conceive a beginning or an end to Space or Time. Though compelled by the constitution of our minds to dogmatise Space and Time as existent and endless (Space in extension and duration; Time in duration), we are lost in the thought of either. We recognise their actual presence, but we cannot intellectually comprehend them. We recognise in ourselves a positive inability to comprehend them. We stand towards them in the relationship of Finite to Infinite.

2. *In Matter*.—Or take matter. How did it begin to be? The problem is absolutely insolvable. "A beginning is uncreate," says Plato sapiently; "for everything that is created must necessarily be created from 'a beginning, but a beginning itself from nothing whatever; for if a beginning were created from anything, it would not be a beginning.'"¹ Exactly; so that the "uncreate" beginning is hidden from us. Obviously, we can make nothing of it. The problem is infinite: requires, probably, none less than the Deity to deal with it. We shall show wisdom, therefore, by leaving this problem of the creation of matter, alone. It is, if possible, more inscrutable than eggs, although it is present with us in all its million-fold manifestations.

To a large number of philosophers, unhappily, philosophy has been a kind of Tower-of-Babel enterprise, ending in a general confusion of tongues. Why? Either because they have failed to realise their intellectual limitations, or, if recognising them, have failed to be warned by the recognition. Standing before the Infinite, they seem to have had no awe of it. Wholly ignorant about it, they have yet chattered about it in multitudinous and stupefying volumes. They do not seem to know when they have reached the Bedrock of any subject; but go on blunting and breaking their tools on the nether adamant. It would

¹ *Phaedrus*, 51.

be of immense service to philosophy at large, if all men would remember that there are some things which they cannot possibly know—some things about which they should be silent.

For example, what a splendid opportunity of holding their tongues is offered to the evolutionists; but they have not the *nous* to seize it. Thousands of Babel volumes giving rise to abundant distraction, are the result of their pigmy struggle with the unknowable—as when Mr. Clodd, with the utmost gravity of countenance, discourses on the “evolution of gas into genius.” So with others who write and talk as if they knew how the Hinges of the Universe were made and screwed up. So with the theologians and their systems, ancient but unholy,—talking as if they had sat all their lives in the Front Parlour of Omniscience. They will gabble and gabble on the very Deeps of Existence—even informing us about the constitution of the Godhead, rather than be silent, not recognising that much silence becometh the theologian well.

R. L. Stevenson on ignorant ignorance and intelligent ignorance.—“That’s the thing about you folk of the College learning,” says Alan Breck to David Balfour, in Stevenson’s novel of *Catriona*, “Ye’re ignorant and ye canna see’t. Wae’s me for my Greek and Hebrew; but, man, I ken that I dinna ken them—there’s the differ of it.” Yes, there’s the differ of it. “To ken that ye dinna ken” is one of the first accomplishments of the true philosopher and the true theologian, whilst most of the bad ones suffer themselves to be hallucinated to the most disastrous extent, through ignoring their own ignorance. Those who try to explain the Origin of things should be warmly advised to observe and seriously lay to heart the great fact that every hair in their heads is rooted and grounded in utter mystery.¹ Bearing this indubitable fact in mind, no

¹ Of course this great fact does not preclude the possibility of a proper study of the hair, nor of washes for the hair.

sensible man will try to expound the Infinite and the Absolute. Thus we get rid of many philosophers.

Dante on the Infinite.—Let us see how we actually stand in relation to the Infinite; let us try to realise our actual weakness in the presence and contemplation thereof. Were we in possession of further data, we might be able to know something more than we do regarding the terrestrial origin of eggs: we might even be able to know a great deal more than is known about the cosmic origin of our planet itself. We might find that it had resulted from the collision of two suns; or broken away from the tail of a comet; or that it was a coagulation of nebulous matter perhaps. But supposing that we were positively able to come to one or other of these conclusions in a perfectly scientific and satisfactory manner (that would be, on unquestionable and sufficient data), we should not rest satisfied, but would immediately proceed probably, to ask where that nebulous matter, or that comet, or those suns, had come from; and granting the possibility of this question being satisfactorily answered, we would again seek to carry our inquiry upward. Indeed, such is the very nature of the human mind—to carry its inquiries upward. But supposing we should have arrived at the parent mass of matter to which our planet had belonged—what then? Where did *that* come from? We are now face to face with the Infinite: we recognise its presence clearly, but we are quite unable to grapple with it.

“The Ken your world is gifted with, descends
In the everlasting Justice, as low down
As eye doth in the sea; which, though it mark
The bottom from the shore, in the wide main
Discerns it not; and ne’ertheless it is:
But hidden through its deepness.”¹

It is to be regretted that in the same poem, Dante himself should be found trying to grapple with the Infinite.² The

¹ *Paradise*, Canto xix.

² *Ib.* Canto xxix. 22–6.

Infinite is a rock upon which all speculators have shivered their timbers—from Thales downwards.

An atom confounds us.—Let us see now, how we stand intellectually with reference not to the mighty mass itself but even to the merest atom of it. “The mind is unable to realise in thought the possibility of an absolute commencement; it cannot conceive that anything which begins to be is anything more than a modification of pre-existing elements; it is unable to view any individual thing as other than a link in the mighty chain of being; and every isolated object is viewed by it only as a fragment, which to be known, must be known in connection with the whole of which it constitutes a part.”¹ In short, the problem of the creation of any, even the merest, speck of matter is infinite—a Mystery, and one, therefore, to be severely left alone. What a pity that our Fichtes and Schellings and Hegels and Cousins did not see this simple truth, and save us from their tortuous and foolish labours on the Absolute.²

And not only are we wholly unable to conceive the beginning of an atom, but, granted its existence, we are totally unable also, to conceive the annihilation of it. “We may turn aside from it; we may occupy our attention with other objects, and we may thus exclude it from our thoughts. This is certain: we need not think of it; but it is equally certain that thinking it, we cannot think it not to exist”—*i.e.* to cease to exist. But, of course, whilst we find it impossible to think of an atom being annihilated, we have no difficulty in thinking of it as undergoing a change of form. “We can figure to ourselves the elements

¹ Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 66–7. Even the materialists acknowledge this truth:—Evolution “can throw no light on the genesis of matter, or on the origination of motion, or on the beginnings of life or of mind. It leaves great and small alike, a centre of impenetrable mystery.” Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, pp. 231–2.

² Their works on “the Absolute” read like horrible contrivances—metaphysical infernal machines, devised for our mental destruction.

of which it is composed distributed and arranged and modified in ten thousand forms—we can imagine anything of it short of annihilation. But the complement or quantum of existence which is realised in any object,—that we cannot represent to ourselves, either as increased without abstraction from other bodies, or as diminished without addition to them. In short, we are unable to construe it in thought that there can be an atom absolutely taken away from existence in general.”¹

But the inconceivable in thought is not impossible in existence.—Now, closely attend to this. We can neither conceive an atom as having an absolute beginning, nor as having an absolute non-beginning. Absolute beginning is totally inconceivable by us; absolute non-beginning is equally inconceivable—although these extremes stand in logical contradiction to each other. But we must not run away with the notion that what is inconceivable to us in thought must be impossible in existence. On the contrary: of logical contradictions one or other *must* be true. Hence we have Hamilton’s great metaphysical dictum—“All that is conceivable is a mean between two contradictory extremes, both of which are inconceivable, but of which, *as mutually repugnant*, the one or the other must be true.”² Whether the limbs of the disjunction be, respectively, conceivable or inconceivable, the atom either had a beginning or had not a beginning. No third alternative is possible.

The right attitude of the Human Mind towards the Infinite.—Nor does our mind furnish us with any excuse for indulging in philosophic scepticism, even in the face of such contradictions. It simply says—“I am weak,—I am finite,—wholly unable to comprehend the Infinite.

¹ Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 404–5: still more fully expressed, pp. 400, 410. Against Hamilton, Mill asserts that “we can conceive both a beginning and an end to all physical existence” (*Examination*, etc., p. 363)—in other words, that he could actually *conceive* the rise of things out of nothing and the disposal of things into nothing!

² *Ib.* vol. i. p. 34.

Put me not to such a task. I know my own powerlessness to comprehend the Infinite." Thus Philosophy—"in demonstrating that the limits of thought are not to be assumed as the limits of possibility, while it admits the weakness of our discursive intellect, re-establishes the authority of consciousness and vindicates the veracity of our primitive convictions. It proves to us from the very laws of mind that while we can never understand how any original datum of intelligence is possible, we have no reason from this inability to doubt that it is true. A learned ignorance is thus the end of philosophy as it is the beginning of theology."¹

Even with respect to the question of divisibility, our atom or speck is an absolute mystery to us. A smallest possible exists or does not exist; yet each disjunctive is inconceivable. Our minds force us to the conclusion that all bodies are mathematically divisible (divisible in thought) down and down *ad infinitum*—down into absolute mystery. We are actually forced to assent to the proposition that even all the parts of bodies are mathematically divisible, although the very thought of a smallest is inconceivable. In fact we must leave the question of a smallest alone: we are quite unable to deal with it.

The Infinite must ever be to the finite an infinitely greasy pole to climb. They are, so far, wise, who do not attempt to climb it; for all such attempts must inevitably terminate for the climbers in a mere pawing of the lower end of the pole—a task, alas, to which thousands of philosophers have barrenly devoted much of their foolish lives. They do not get up the pole far enough to enable them, even, to obtain a pleasant slide down to the ground. Think of the amazing ineptitude even of a Kant when he ventures to tell us that God "even to Himself can never be an object of sensuous intuition."² He would have been

¹ Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 34.

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 43.

saved from such witless thoughts if he had only been wise enough to remember that "things infinite are too large for our capacity."¹ I steadily hold that the infinite and the inapproachable should be reserved for the consideration of Gods or—children.

3. *Concerning the existence of the Supreme Being.*—If even such things as we have noted are utterly mysterious in their ultimate nature, the existence of a Supreme Being, or a First Cause, with all its attributes must, *a fortiori*, be utterly mysterious. If the beginning of an atom be incomprehensible (which it is)—an operation absolutely baffling and confounding to human thought, obviously the existence of the Creator of the Atom must be a still deeper mystery: therefore the immeasurable folly of attempting to plumb this mystery; of being fond enough to suppose that we may understand God.

Deep however, yea, unfathomable though that mystery be, it would neither justify us in coming to the conclusion that a First Cause did not exist, nor that we cannot know anything of the nature of that First Cause. Causes may be partly known from their effects. A beautiful work of art carries our thoughts back to the idea of an artist with beautiful thoughts and deft manual powers; a well-cultivated field of grain carries our thoughts back to the idea of an intelligent and industrious farmer; a visit to the Forth Bridge immediately convinces us that there are admirable engineering intelligences among us; a visit to a cotton-mill with its thousands of whirring looms, immediately impresses us with the conviction of human ingenuity; a noble poem immediately gives rise to thoughts of the

¹ *Locke*: A. C. Fraser, p. 35. Mr. W. L. Courtney makes a mistake similar to that of Kant when he says—"We ascribe consciousness to God, but we do not ascribe the limited consciousness of individuality." *Constructive Ethics*, p. 51. All such speculations are quite illegitimate. No human attempt to span Divinity can succeed. Is any poor man unfortunate enough to suppose that he really comprehends God, or has any chance of comprehending *Him*!

noble mind that gave utterance to it. Such is our position also in view of the works of Nature; whilst it is apparent at a glance that the works of Nature are infinitely grander than the works of man. Then, just as we inevitably conclude a Mind behind a mill, and judge something, or apprehend something, of the Mind behind the mill, so in view of the works of Nature the natural Mind of man concludes the existence of a Mind behind the works of Nature; and as the works of Nature seem to be on the whole very clever, ingenious, useful, powerful, beautiful, sublime, thereupon, by parity of reasoning, we reach the conclusion arrived at by most of the wise men of most ages and nations, that there exists behind the works of Nature, a Mind very clever, ingenious, practical, powerful, beautiful, sublime: in a word, we bethink us of an Infinite God.

Touching this great question, the existence of God, one of two conclusions, and only two, is open to us. Behind the veil of Nature, there is either a First Cause (*i.e.* God), or no Cause. If a First Cause, it is absolutely incomprehensible and scientifically inapproachable by us; if no Cause at all, the mystery of existence is no whit lessened. We are intellectually impotent to grapple with either alternative; but on the analogy of our human experience as just set forth, and on the authority of the Causal Judgment, which I propose to discuss in the next chapter, we are forced to the conclusion that there is a First Cause. In other words, arguing from the Known to the Unknown, an absolutely scientific rule of procedure, it is rational to suppose that there is a First Cause; and irrational to suppose that things are causeless or blindly determined. The fitness, beauty, magnificence and perfection apparent in so many of the known works of Nature, may well be taken, I submit, as a high "warranty" of the existence of a Power adequate to produce such Works. In other words, the analogy of the finite forces us

to the conclusion, as aforesaid, that there is an Infinite God.

4. *Concerning the mysterious in general.*—Thus, with regard to the Infinite generally, it is not legitimate to argue as the sceptics do, that “what cannot be comprehended as possible by us, is impossible in reality”; for, as we have seen, the necessities of thought “are not always positive powers of cognition, but of the negative inabilities to know.” Consciousness “is never spontaneously false, and Reason is only self-contradictory when driven beyond its legitimate bounds. We are therefore warranted to rely on a deliverance of consciousness when that deliverance is *that* a thing is, though we may be unable to think how it is.”¹ Consciousness is the most positive of all things and *it is the only criterion by which we can be positive about anything.*

Folly of wrestling with the Infinite.—Now, one would think, as previously remarked, that it might be a very easy task for philosophers not to talk about things which they don’t understand, beyond saying that they don’t understand them; but, unhappily, these appear to be the very things they most delight to talk about, much to the confusion and loss of philosophy. “As soon as they are entangled in the words infinite and eternal, of which we have no idea but that of our insufficiency to comprehend them, they are forced,” as Hobbes said, “either to speak something absurd, or which they love worse, to hold their peace.”² Would that they held their peace! Consider, for example, the following Kantian pronouncement:—“Unfortunately for speculation—but perhaps fortunately for the practical interests of humanity—Reason in the midst of her highest anticipations finds herself hemmed in by a press of opposite and contradictory conclusions from which,” says he, “neither her honour nor her safety will permit her to draw back.”³ Surely, a most absurd conclusion. Surely

¹ Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 404, 544.

² *English Works*, vol. i. p. 414. ³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 291.

both honour and safety demand that speculation shall retire from braving the impossible, the incogitable. Even decency requires it. Do you know all about a flea? No. Then why, in the name of thunder, should you think it possible to tell us all about God!¹ Explain the flea first. It is really inexcusable that any man, born like a wild ass's colt, should be rash enough to suppose that he may plumb the depths of all the Universe. It is entirely proper, yea, expedient, to think of things down to the very Bedrock of consciousness and up to the very heights of intelligence, but it argues imbecility in the thinker to attempt to think deeper than that Bedrock of consciousness or higher than these heights of intelligence. It is remarkable that a man of Kant's discernment did not see the fatuity of such efforts. He never seems to have known when he was wrangling about questions beyond our faculties. This, I think, is one of the root-errors and chief sources of confusion in his metaphysics. Trespass upon the Unknowable is the grand sin of speculators of all kinds. The chief fruit of such speculations is a vile spawn of "Gorgons, Hydras and Chimeras dire." Let not the sober student follow them in their folly. Let him tenaciously remember that all science, all philosophy, all theology and all religion must take their departure from the data of consciousness (in its powers of intuition, observation and reasoning), steadily stepping forward from truth to truth and from fact to fact, as there given; and that, conversely, all science must return to consciousness for its ultimate justification and ratification. No other sound method of procedure is conceivable. Neither affirmation, nor denial, nor doubt is rightly possible, but upon the basis of consciousness. "Ego" says that such a thing "is so." Ego's

¹ For example, did the unfortunate Hegel suppose he was uttering anything sensible when he wrote—"God is Himself Consciousness, He distinguishes Himself from Himself within Himself, and as Consciousness, He gives Himself as object for what we call the side of Consciousness"? *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 329. His work seems to be a prolonged Hum-m-m-m.

ultimate and basal proof for anything is—"I am convinced it is so." This consideration destroys at one blow (in thought, of course) all transcendental, esoterical, mystical and occult sciences, philosophies and theologies, and establishes the theoretical necessity of common sense.

Fertility of the finite.—This view of the Infinite ought, at once, both to humble and elevate us. It ought to humble us by the view which it gives of the comparative insignificance of our intellectual powers in general; whilst on the other hand, it ought to afford us high gratification that we have intellect enough to recognise our intellectual impotence in relation to the Universe in its totality. To know that we know some things is a mark of common intelligence (indeed, as we have seen, it is disastrous not to be possessed of this mark of intelligence); whilst to know that we know not, but can yet apprehend, the presence of the Infinite, is a mark of philosophic dignity which brings us into a sublime spiritual relationship with the Infinite. We are not in the presence of the Infinite like sticks or stones; we are not like dumb cattle; we view it not through glass eyes; it does not stand to us as Infinite Negative but as Infinite Positive. We regard, with awe and worship, the positive presence of the Infinite, whilst we actually know that we are unable to comprehend its Immensity. Whilst we cannot see God Himself, I think we can see some evidences of the Divine Power and Majesty; whilst we are unable to understand Him, I think we may very reasonably wonder and worship before Him—very reasonably wish and nobly labour to stand towards Him as sons and daughters. These, I think, may be taken to be positive and high marks of our intelligence and dignity.

Lao - Tsze's rhapsody on the Infinite. — "In the beginning," says Lao - Tsze, "there was nought but chaos. O, how wild, O, how obscure it was! Then, out of its midst, came forth forms. O, how wild, O, how

obscure it was! Out of its midst came natural objects. O, the stillness, O, the darkness! Out of its midst came forth the fount of life,—perfect in subtlety. Out of its midst came consciousness, so that from then till now, the knowledge of all this remains, and we are enabled to see all that has happened in the world, pass in review before us. Should it be asked how it is that I have this knowledge of the beginning of all things, I give all that I have now written as my answer.”¹ Yet it is rather an unprofitable rhapsody; we know nothing of “the Beginning.”

Socrates on the Infinite.—“Wonder,” says Socrates, “is very much the affection of a philosopher, for there is no other beginning of philosophy than this.”²

Carlyle on the Infinite.—Amongst moderns, Carlyle, perhaps, has most clearly seen the Divine significance of wonder. “Wonder is the basis of worship; the reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in man; only at certain stages (as the present), it is for some short season, *in partibus infidelium*. That progress of science which is to destroy wonder and in its stead substitute Mensuration and Numeration, finds small favour with Teufelsdröckh, much as he otherwise venerates these two latter processes.

“Shall your science,” exclaims he, “proceed in the small chink-lighted, or even oil-lighted, underground workshop of Logic alone; and man’s mind become an Arithmetical Mill, whereof Memory is the Hopper, and mere tables of sines and tangents, codification and treatises of what you call political economy, are the Meal? And what is that science which the scientific head alone, were it screwed off and (like the Doctor’s in the Arabian Tale) set in a basin to keep it alive, could prosecute without shadow of a heart,—but one other of the mechanical and menial handicrafts, for which the scientific head (having a soul in it) is too noble an organ? I mean that thought without

¹ *The Tao-T’ih-King*, c. xxi.

² *Theaetetus*, 32.

reverence¹ is barren, perhaps poisonous ; at best dies like cooking with the day that called it forth ; does not live like sowing, in successive tilths and wide-spreading harvests, bringing food and plenteous increase to all time.

"In such wise does Teufelsdröckh deal hits, harder or softer, according to ability ; yet ever as we would fain persuade ourselves, with charitable intent. Above all that class of Logic-choppers and treble-pipe scoffers, and professed enemies to wonder ; who in these days so numerously patrol as night-constables about the Mechanics' Institute of Science, and cackle like true old-Roman geese and goslings round their Capitol, on any alarm or on none ; nay, who often as illuminated sceptics, walk abroad into peaceable society, in full daylight, with rattle and lantern, and insist on guiding you and guarding you therewith, though the sun is shining, and the street populous with mere justice-loving men. That whole class is inexpressibly wearisome to him. Hear with what uncommon animation he perorates :—

"The man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship), were he President of innumerable Royal Societies and carried the whole *Mecanique Celeste* and *Hegel's Philosophy*, and the epitome of all Laboratories and Observatories with their results, in his single head, is but a pair of spectacles, behind which there is no eye. Let those who have eyes look through him, that he may be useful.

"Thou wilt have no mystery ; wilt walk through thy world by the sunshine of what thou callest truth, or even by the hand-lamp of what I call Attorney-Logic, and explain all and account for all, or believe nothing of it ? Nay, thou wilt attempt laughter ; who so recognises the

¹ Some confusion here in the thinking. Reverence itself is a product of thought. Irreverence results from defect of thought. The more thought regarding the Universe, the more reverence ; the less thought, the less reverence.

unfathomable, all-pervading domain of Mystery, which is everywhere under our feet and among our hands; to whom the Universe is an Oracle and Temple as well as a Kitchen and Cattle-stall, he shall be a delirious mystic; to him, thou with sniffing charity wilt protrusively offer thy hand-lamp, and shriek, as one injured, when he kicks his foot through it? *Armer Teufel!* Wert thou not born? Wilt thou not die? Explain me all this, or do one of two things: Return into private places with thy foolish cackle; or, what were better, give it up and weep, not that the reign of wonder is done, and God's World all dis-embellished and prosaic, but that thou hitherto art a Dilettante and Sand-blind Pedant."¹

Conclusion of the matter.—In a word, we are finite; and in all its attempts and attacks upon the Infinite, the finite is simply baffled and driven back in chaotic confusion. Speculatively, the highest thing we can do, is to stand over against the Infinite in the high consciousness of intelligent, though limited, recognition. The philosopher realising his finitude, must leave the Infinite alone—speculatively. "A world of false and pestilent and presumptuous reasoning, by which philosophy and theology are now equally discredited, would be at once abolished in the recognition of this rule of prudent nescience."² "The Power which the Universe manifests to us, is utterly inscrutable."³

5. *Summary of this Chapter.*—It clearly appears, then, I think, that the Universe stands to us intellectually, in one or other of these four relationships: either as—

- I. The Known; or
- II. The Knowable; or
- III. The Unknowable through inaccessibility of evidence; or
- IV. The Unknowable in itself,—the Inscrutable,—the Mysterious.

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. i. c. x.

² Hamilton: *Discussions*, p. 621.

³ Spencer: *First Principles*, p. 46.

Provinces to which the Philosopher should confine his operations.—The student, then, ought clearly to confine his operations within the fields of I. and II. Intellectually, he might as well get bitten by a mad dog as trudge off with his horn-lantern, tapes, callipers and compasses to explore the territories of III. and IV. Sound Sense will teach him to regard both of these latter regions not merely as *terra adhuc incognita*, but as *terra* likely to remain *incognita*. Far better for a philosopher to play with a child's rattle than set off upon any expedition into the Infinite. If the Universe were hung with turnip-lanterns, instead of suns and systems, he could not fully explain it, all turnips and candles even, being, in the last resort, inscrutable.

In the year 1553, the Company of Merchant Adventurers was chartered for "the discovery of regions, dominions, islands and places unknown"—a perfectly reasonable proceeding in those days: but no philosopher need charter himself to explore the Infinite. All that he can profitably do is to consider what may be properly inferred from what he actually knows,—actually experiences, as to what is beyond and above experience.¹

¹ What Hamilton called Ontology, or "Inferential Psychology" (*Lectures*, vol. i. p. 125)—logical deductions from facts of consciousness. "An articulate knowledge of the necessary implications of axiomatic truth." Cook: *Monday Lectures* (2nd Series), p. 58.

CHAPTER VI

WE MUST OBSERVE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NECESSARY AND CONTINGENT TRUTH

It is very important that the philosopher should note the great distinction that exists between Truth Necessary and Truth Contingent. This distinction will be found to yield great consequences, more especially in the Science of Religion.

The distinction observed by Plato.—This distinction seems to have been observed, vaguely, at least, as far back as Plato, who, in the *Timaëus*, discriminates between that “which is ever existent” and has no generation, and that “which is in a state of generation or becoming.” The former, he says, “is apprehended by reflection united with reason,” and “always subsists according to sameness”: whilst the latter is, as he phrases it, only “perceived by opinion united with irrational perception.”¹

In the *Introduction of Alcinous to the Doctrine of Plato*, it is said that Reason is twofold. “One part of it is conversant with things perceptible by the mind; the other about things perceptible by a sense; of which the one conversant with things perceptible by the mind is science and scientific reason; but the other conversant with things perceptible by a sense, is opinionative and opinion. From whence the scientific possesses a firmness and stability, as being conversant with principles firm and stable; but the credible and opinionative possess probability as being conversant about things not stable.”²

¹ *Timaëus*, ix.

² *Introduction of Alcinous*, c. iv.

By Aristotle.—So Aristotle:—"Common to all first principles is the being the original from whence either a thing is, or is produced, or is known. But of these principles, some, indeed, are inherent and others are extrinsic."¹ By the words inherent and extrinsic, we may, I think, apprehend that the necessary and the contingent are meant. Again he says:—"There are two divisions of the rational part (of the soul); one by which we contemplate those existing things, the principles of which are in necessary matter; the other, by which we contemplate those, the principles of which are contingent."²

By Bacon.—The distinction was also seen by Bacon:—"Physic should contemplate that which is inherent in matter and therefore transitory; and metaphysic, that which is abstracted and fixed. . . . Physic should handle that which supposeth in nature only a being and moving; and metaphysic should handle that which supposeth further in nature, a reason, understanding and plat-form." Physic treats of the causes, "but variable or respective causes; and metaphysic the fixed and constant causes."³

By Hobbes.—Hobbes recognised "primary or most universal propositions which are manifest of themselves."⁴

By Descartes.—Descartes wrote:—"Whether I am awake or dreaming, it remains true that two and three make five, and that a square has but four sides; nor does it seem possible that truths so apparent, can ever fall under a suspicion of falsity."⁵ A philosopher, I think, would be better employed in sucking a toothering-ring than in combating such a proposition.

By Leibnitz.—Leibnitz, criticising Locke, says—In that philosopher's work, "There are some particulars not ill-expounded, but on the whole, he had wandered far from the

¹ *Metaphysics*, Bk. iv. i.

² *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. vi. i. 4.

³ *Adv. of Learning*, Bk. ii. ; *Works*, vol. i. p. 101.

⁴ *English Works*, vol. i. p. 81.

⁵ *Meditations*, i.

gate; nor has he understood the nature of the Intellect. Had he sufficiently considered the nature of necessary truths or those apprehended by demonstration, and those which become known to us by induction alone, he would have seen that those which are necessary could only have been approved to us by principles native to the mind; seeing that the senses indeed inform us what *may* take place, but not what necessarily takes place. The senses . . . never give us more than examples, that is to say, particular or individual truths. Now all the examples which confirm a general truth, how numerous soever they may be, are insufficient to establish the universal necessity of the same truth: for it does not follow that what has happened, will happen always in like manner. For example, the Greeks and Romans and other nations have always observed that during twenty-four hours, day is changed into night, and night into day. But we should be wrong were we to believe that the same rule holds everywhere, as the contrary has been observed during a residence in Nova Zembla. Hence it appears that the necessary truths such as we find them in pure mathematics, behove to have principles, the truth of which does not depend upon examples, and consequently, not on the evidence of (corporeal) sense.”¹

*By Hume, inconstantly.*²—Hume, in an imperfect way, quite insufficient for his own guidance, had also some glimmering of this great distinction. “That three times five is equal to the half of thirty, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the Universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their

¹ Quoted by Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 353-5.

² I say “inconstantly,” because Hume is continually contradicting himself on psychological questions.

certainty in evidence.”¹ “But that Caesar, or the angel Gabriel, or any being never existed, may be a false proposition, but still is perfectly conceivable, and implies no contradiction.”²

By Reid.—Reid saw the distinction in its full significance, probably, and truly declared that many men had “lost much labour by not distinguishing things which require proof, from things which, though they may admit of illustration, yet, being self-evident, do not admit of proof”;³ and in other parts of his works, he enounces the distinction with the most admirable clearness,⁴ and turns it to high practical ends. Indeed, the distinction was, at least, implicitly recognised by a large number of old writers; but, according to Hamilton, Liebnitz was the first, in the order of time, by whom it was clearly enunciated; whilst he attributes to Kant the honour of being the first who fully applied the distinction in the science of mind.⁵ But it seems to me that the last mentioned philosopher squanders away the whole advantage of the distinction by his theory of objective illusion.

By Hamilton.—Hamilton himself makes some very useful remarks on the subject:—“The faculty of self-consciousness affords us a knowledge of the phenomena of our minds. It is the source of external experience. You will therefore observe that, like external perception, it only furnishes us with facts, and that the use we make of those facts—that is, what we find in them, what we deduce from them—belongs to a different process of intelligence. Self-consciousness affords the materials equally to all systems of philosophy. . . . These materials may be considered in two ways. We may employ either induction

¹ *Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. iv. pt. i.; *Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 21-2.

² *Ib.*, Sect. xii. pt. iii. p. 134.

³ *On the Intellectual Powers*, i. 2, p. 231.

⁴ *e.g.* vi. 6, p. 455, where he refutes Hume’s theory of cause.

⁵ *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 194-5.

alone, or also analysis. If we merely consider the phenomena which self-consciousness reveals, in relation to each other,—merely compare them together and generalise the qualities which they display in common, and thus arrange them into classes or groups governed by the same laws, we perform the process of induction. By this process we obtain what is general, but not what is necessary. For example, having observed that external objects presented in perception, are extended, we generalise the notion of extension as space, but only of space as a general or contingent notion; for if we hold that this notion exists in the mind only as the result of such a process, we must hold it to be *a posteriori* or adventitious, and therefore contingent. Such is the process of induction or simple observation. The other process, that of analysis or criticism, does not rest satisfied with this comparison and generalisation, which it, however, supposes. It proposes to find not merely what is general in the phenomena, but what is necessary and universal. It accordingly takes mental phenomena, and by abstraction, throws aside all that it is able to detach, without annihilating the phenomena altogether,—in short, it analyses thought into its essential or necessary, and its accidental or contingent, elements. Thus from observation and deduction, we discern what experience affords as its general result; from analysis and criticism, we discern what experience supposes as its necessary condition.”¹

Thus the sum of our cognitions is of two primary kinds—the Necessary and the Contingent. Certain things we think of as universal, necessary; others, as a result of a series of singular or individual observations. The former is *a priori* thought; the latter, *a posteriori*. “What I cannot but think, must be *a priori*, or original to thought; it cannot be engendered by experience or

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii, pp. 192–3. He goes on to show that all necessity is subjective.

custom.”¹ What I need not necessarily think, is adventitious knowledge—knowledge derived from the particular observations of myself or others. Simultaneously with the apprehension of an *a priori* truth, comes the conviction of its necessity; whilst the inductive process brings us a knowledge only of *what is*, not of what must be; of the actual, merely, not the necessary.

A priori principles carry their proof with them.—Here it should be carefully noted, also, that it is wholly incompetent for us to enter into proof of *a priori* cognitions or first principles. “Concerning all things, it is impossible that there should be a demonstration; for demonstration must needs be composed of certain principles,”²—namely, first principles. “About things eternal, no man deliberates.” “Respecting the exact and self-sufficient sciences, there is no deliberation.”³ “It suffices in first principles that their existence be clearly shown.”⁴ So, Descartes:—“I frequently remarked that philosophers erred in attempting to explain by logical definition, such truths as are most simple and self-evident, for they then only rendered them more obscure.”⁵ The *ὅτι* is enough without the *διότι*. It would have been well if Hume and others had noted and pondered upon this aspect of necessary truth,—simultaneously with the apprehension of which—as already observed, comes the conviction of its necessity.

A caution.—Here, however, to avoid misunderstanding, let it be premised that though we properly speak of *a priori* and necessary truth, the crude thought of such truths, as well as the crude observation of contingent truths, has to be refined and rendered definite by reflection. Thus the note of necessity need not be instantaneously marked on any truth, in order to establish its claim to

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 191.

² Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, Bk. ii. c. ii.

³ *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. iii. c. iii.

⁴ *Ib.*, Bk. i. c. vii.

⁵ *The Principles of Philosophy*, Part i. s. x.

necessary rank. It is sufficient for all rational purposes to observe that the *a priori* truth is seen on reflection to be necessary. Indeed, necessary truths might properly be called truths of reflection.

But the validity and utility of such distinctions as necessary and contingent, will best be shown in exemplifications. Let us, in the first place, proceed to exemplify contingent truths.

(A) SOME CONTINGENT TRUTHS

After we have considered some of these, we shall still more clearly recognise the nature of necessary truth. We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that any person, place or thing whatever, should have existed. We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that space need have been other than a blind and unfathomable void—a “void inane.”

1. *Human existence and Human Nature.*—Take human existence. We are under no constraint of necessity to think that a Garibaldi, say, must have existed. We can neither assume him nor any other individual, to be a necessity in Nature. He is simply a contingency—an individual fact, with which we have become acquainted. But the fact after it is there, is, of course, as unquestionable as any necessary truth; and we cannot go behind it. Whether you or I exist, is not a question for argument, it must be taken as a matter of fact that we do exist.

We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that a man must have two feet. The Darwinians gaily tell us that four is the right number—that man “has not yet become completely adapted to the erect position which he has assumed,” and that this “is proved by his liability to hernia, which he would escape by going on all fours.”¹ We are not in a position to say that this grotesque dogma

¹ *Athenaeum*, 1886, vol. i. p. 329.

is *necessarily* false. We simply look abroad upon our fellow-men, and find, on a general survey, that, as a rule, man is a two-footed animal. By an induction from a multitude of particular cases, we arrive at the general rule,—a general rule, however, which does not carry within it the elements of necessity. It is an observational, empirical, or contingent truth beyond question in fact, that man has two feet.

We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that we must necessarily have eyes, ears, nose or any other of the familiar organs which we possess. We might be served by a very different class of physical organs: at all events, we are under no incapacity of thinking of the possibility of our being served by different organs. But all the same, we have the fact beyond dispute that man is an eyed, nosed and eared animal. It is an observational, empirical or contingent truth; but none the less a truth—which we must take for granted in all discussions.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that we shall see through the eyes, hear through the ears, smell through the nose, or taste through the palate. The “why” of either process is absolutely unknown to us; yet those organs accomplish their respective functions so generally, that we take man to be a seeing and hearing animal, and assume it to be true in all our thoughts on the subject.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that those bodily organs give us correct information about the external world; yet on the whole, we find the information which they enable us to obtain, so reliable, especially as to what are called the primary qualities of bodies,—length, breadth, thickness, resistance, etc., that we are bound to accept their existence touching these primary qualities. Indeed, if we speculatively refuse to accept their evidence, we immediately render ourselves speculatively ridiculous; whilst if we refused to accept it in practice,—which is the

true test of all theories, we should probably get killed immediately, or lodged in a jail or a lunatic asylum: a consideration which, even by itself alone, should put an end to every sceptical theory.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that man must be endowed with memory. We simply learn from experience that he possesses it, without understanding even the possibility of it; and that he cannot speak one sentence without it. Indeed it is necessary to postulate memory before we can speak of experience or anything else.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that we must be endowed with the logical or elaborative faculty. We simply know that we possess it from the invincible facts of the case.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that we must hunger and thirst and desire things. We simply know it from the hungering, thirsting, esurient facts of the case.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that we must possess Free Will. We simply learn from our own consciousness that we do, as a matter of fact, possess it; and consciousness, as we have seen, is our highest and ultimate experience in any conceivable circumstances. Thought cannot, in any conceivable case, transcend consciousness and its implications, nor find any warranty of truth outside of its own assurances. In fact we simply know ourselves, in any of our faculties or capacities, as we are revealed to ourselves in consciousness. Proof of anything simply means bringing it home to consciousness. All sound reasoning begins and ends in facts of consciousness. (It is, of course, in consciousness itself that we are able to distinguish between necessary and contingent truth.) All we can say about Free Will is that we are consciously possessed of it. Above or below or behind that portentous fact, we cannot go—no more than we can storm Jupiter with brick-bats.

To "climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate" is doubtlessly a very ridiculous proceeding; but unhappily, all the metaphysicians save those who belong to the Common-Sense School and venerate the natural endowments of Smith and Brown, have been ever applying themselves to this *labor ineptiarum*—trying to obtain knowledge behind, instead of through, consciousness.

That veracious knight and traveller, Sir John Maundevile wrote as follows:—"In that Isle that is clept Dondum, be folk of divers kinds, so that the father eateth the son, and the son the father, the husband the wife and the wife the husband."¹ Unless it be taken in the Kilkenny-cat sense, this tale about the isle clept Dondum does not come into contact with necessary truth.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that our bodies must wear out and die. We simply learn it from an experience so wide and impressive that none but madmen can call it in question. Here notice, however, the generic difference between contingent and necessary truth. "Men generally die," is only a contingent truth. It may be quite true that Enoch and Elijah did not die; it may happen that other persons, in the future, shall not die: thus the contingent truth does not preclude the possibility of change or exception. Not so with necessary truth. Necessary truths preclude the possibility of change or exception. Enoch and Elijah are not under an *a priori* necessity of dying; but they, like all other persons, are under the necessity of finding that $2 \times 2 = 4$ to all eternity, without change or exception; that stealing is a sin,—a *malum in se*, to all eternity: provided, of course, that these great men address themselves to the consideration of such questions. This point has to be noticed, for "we ought not to imagine that we can read in the soul, *ad aperturam libri*, as we can read the Edict of the Praetor, without trouble or research; but it is enough that we can

¹ *Adventures*, p. 249.

discover such truths in ourselves by dint of attention, when the occasions are presented to us.”¹

It is only a contingent truth that the locks tend to grow scanty and the teeth scarce, at the approach of old age: of which, itself, Montaigne remarks that it is “an undoubted sign of the approach of Death”²—a truth, no doubt, although some foolish old persons scarcely seem to see it; but it is only a contingent truth; and old age need not necessarily have been indicative of approaching dissolution. Instead of that, it might, quite conceivably, have been consistent with growth of noble strength and power in all our faculties.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that the dead shall not return. Some may have returned; some may return. Whether some have returned or not, is all a question of *a posteriori* evidence. The whole of human history must submit to be tried by *a posteriori* evidence. Churchmen especially should meditate upon this simple truth with earnestness and perfect candour. If they could be persuaded to do so, it would be a source of enlightenment to their studies and discourse. All contingent propositions are triable and determinable by *a posteriori* evidence; whereas all necessary propositions are *a priori*, and carry their own evidence with them continually.

2. *Touching the lower animals.*—Or turn to the lower animals. We are under no prior necessity of expecting to find any of the lower animals upon the face of the earth. Horses, cows, dogs, lions, bears, wolves, elephants, flies, microbes—no prior necessity of anticipating their existence at all. We simply find them—living facts, not to be disputed at all. We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that the ox shall browse on grass, or the lion on oxen. We simply gather a multitude of facts together from observation, and generalise our contingent truths

¹ Leibnitz, quoted by Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 355.

² *Essays*, vol. iii. p. 413.

from these gathered facts. We are under no prior necessity of thinking that the Ocean must be inhabited. If a person without any previous aquatic experiences or information, were taken within full view of the rolling sea and told that it was inhabited by countless myriads of creatures, from animalcula up to whales, he would probably be incredulous at first, but experience would correct his incredulity. We are under no prior necessity of anticipating that animals of any kind shall be able to spin their way through the invisible atmosphere; but—behold them upon the wing. Everything we know in the Animal Kingdom is in the nature of contingent truth. It exists, but is under no prior necessity of existing, as far as we can discover.

The Rip Van Winkle locust.—So purely contingent is Zoological truth even at this late date, and though so large a proportion of the world has been more or less carefully explored, that naturalists occasionally discover animals possessed of such characteristics as they had not previously anticipated. Take the American Locust (the *cicada-septemdecem*). The singularity of this animal is “that it comes out regularly every seventeen years—whence the name.” In short it appears to be a kind of Rip Van Winkle in the Locust World. “But what becomes of the perfect insects?” asks the writer, in the *Journal* from which I quote. His answer is—“How the eggs germinate; how and why they become so deeply buried under ground, and what metamorphosis they undergo during their long burial, no one knows. The only thing certain about them is that they will return punctually at the end of seventeen years, and neither earlier nor later.”¹ So far, our author. After this Rip Van Winkle Locust, we need scarcely be surprised at butterflies “two-to-the-acre.”

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that animals are not possessed of high mental powers. We are

¹ *Chambers's Journal*, Jan. 1895, p. 39.

only in a position to say that the evidence educible by observation yields no certain knowledge touching that subject. On the evidence which we possess, we may well say that they have high instincts, but that these instincts appear to be widely different in their nature from intellectual powers. As already remarked, there seems to be no progression in instinct. The young bee seems to be as clever as the old bee;¹ the inexperienced ant seems to be as clever and industrious as the experienced; the swallow of one year, as good a nest-builder as the swallow of many years. With all this wondrous instinct, they still seem to possess no discourse of reason; no power of going out of a groove except in so far as they may be guided by automatic action; no apparent desire to go out of it. The ant of Solomon's time seems to have been as clever and noteworthy in its diligence and resources as the ant of our time. The ants of our time seem to have made no addition to the cleverness of the ancestral ants; so it would seem that we are fairly safe in concluding that they are not endowed with what we call intellect. But this proof is not complete; and as I have just said, we are under no prior necessity of thinking that they have none of the higher powers of mind. So far, however, neither the ant nor the elephant (most intelligent, apparently of lower animals) is even a prospective student of philosophy.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that the lower animals are devoid of moral powers; only as a matter of sober fact, they don't seem to have them. There seems to be almost no probability that the cuttle-fish, say, is opposed in its operations by any moral hindrances, or inspired by any moral helps; though all we can positively

¹ The bee is reported to be furnished with "automatic," but not with "influential" arcs. Cook: *Monthly Lectures*, 2nd Series, pp. 33-5. "Two bees under precisely the same circumstances will do precisely the same things." *Ib.*

say is that the facts of the case seem to be opposed to such a conclusion. There seems to be no probability that the Ape even,—high and lifted up though it be since Lord Monboddo speculated, is possessed of Christian potentialities.

“Some lady of the mere
Sitting upon the shores of old romance,”

is a delightful object of contemplation, but a gibbering ape sitting upon the shores either of old or new romance, is a sufficiently hopeless spectacle. There, to-day, he sits in his cage or elsewhere—chattering and defiant of missionaries. From an innumerable number of such facts we generalise the contingent truth, cuttle-fishes, apes and the lower animals generally, give no sure sign of possessing moral endowments.

3. *Touching the Vegetable Kingdom.*—We are in the same kind of predicament when we come to consider the products of the vegetable kingdom. There is no *a priori* truth connected with it. We are under no prior necessity of anticipating that, given the planet *Terra*, there need be any vegetation upon it at all. The complete absence of vegetation from every part of it is quite cogitable; but we are confronted, at the same time, with the beautiful but inexplicable fact that it is well-nigh covered with vegetation.

We are under no prior necessity of supposing that any plants should produce flowers, yet observation presents us with the beautiful but inexplicable fact that many of them do produce flowers. Upon this same *a posteriori*, or inductive, method, we also proceed to arrange them under genera, species, etc.

We are under no prior necessity of thinking that apple-trees must bear apples. Some don't; but they generally do, in certain circumstances; so we generalise a genus of apple trees.

There is no prior reason why cocoa-nuts should not

grow under ground and potatoes up in the air. We have nothing but the facts of the respective cases to guard us against the possibility of such an assumption. But the facts being given, they are regulative, absolute; and we must accept them on the spot.

There is no prior necessity of thinking that a cherry stone should be inside the cherry. We simply learn from observation that it is generally to be found inside. But, on the other hand, the Australian cherry is said to have the stone of it attached to the outside of the fruit; and it appears that the cashew-nut (*anacardium occidentale*) is similarly constructed.¹

By cross-breeding, too, and hybridisation, and other artificial means, the most astounding results can be produced in the plant world. Mr. Luther Burbank, a great American gardener, is, it appears, doing great things in this way. "By crossing the common blackberry of California with a Siberian raspberry, he has produced a new berry which he calls the Primus berry. Taking a wild American plum, a Japanese plum and an apricot, as the basis of another experiment, he has produced a new fruit which he calls the Plumcot. . . . By crossing the tomato with the potato, he has produced a new vegetable or fruit, which he calls the Pomato. It grows upon potato tops, and is succulent, pleasant to the taste, and white in colour." He has produced "a new variety of rhubarb which bears all the year round"; and so on. By similar means, his success with flowers has been equally wonderful. "Working upon the common daisy as a basis, he has produced a new daisy six inches in diameter!" He has also succeeded in making fruit trees, "such as the peach, nectarine, and plum, able to resist frost, and withstand freezing in bud and flower."² So

¹ Mrs. Blake: "In the Bahamas," *Nineteenth Century*, May 1888, p. 688.

² J. L. M. in the *Scotsman*, 27th June 1905, under article, "Science and Nature."

plastic do plants seem to be under very skilful and careful artificial treatment.

There is no prior necessity of thinking that the timber of an oak-tree should differ from that of a willow; or a willow from a fir. We simply find that, as a matter of indubitable fact, they do differ in their respective timbers; and from induction made upon these observed facts, we formulate general propositions as to the particular qualities of willow, fir, and oak timber. Indeed, there does not appear to be any botanical truth whatever, which is not of a purely contingent, or *a posteriori*, nature.

4. *Touching Chemistry.*—So is it in Chemistry. There is no *a priori* truth connected with it. It is wholly an *a posteriori* science—founded upon objective observation. Hitherto, for example, there have been discovered only two or three elements in the atmosphere. There may be many more. There is no prior necessity to think that there should be more than three or less than three. The facts which, up to this date, have been observed, are all that we know regarding the chemical composition of the atmosphere. So, with regard to the chemical composition of all other substances. “The progress of chemistry,” said the historian Buckle, “will eventually equalise all soils.”¹ Such a consummation, it must be confessed, does not seem likely; but it does not contain an *a priori* falsehood. It might be true. So, if Omnipotence had willed it, we might have had quarries of Diamond as well as quarries of Granite—only the

¹ *Posthumous Works*, vol. i. p. 143. Mr. Lewes pompously wrote—for I have never heard that he was on the staff of *Punch*:—“A prophetic view discerns in the distant future, a reduction of all cosmical phenomena to Mechanics; the doctrine of vibrations will then be the abstract science of which all cosmical sciences will be the concretes.” *History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 705, note. The key to his position is to be found in his statement that “the first step which a philosopher takes in any inquiry is a departure from Common Sense.” *Ib.* p. 302. It would have been extremely amusing to have watched Mr. Lewes propounding this doctrine, say, to a general meeting of the Institute of Civil Engineers!

quarries of Diamond might not have been so useful as those of Granite.

5. *Touching Physics*.—So, in Physics. We are under no prior necessity of thinking that the earth should go round the sun, or the moon round the earth; or that the earth should revolve on its own axis. Men have simply learned from very long and arduous and patient observation that, as matters of fact, they do execute these wonderful and beautiful movements. We are under no prior necessity of thinking that bodies should be attracted by each other. Physicists have discovered this law of gravitation through a patient and thoroughgoing induction upon the observed facts of the case.

6. *Touching Cosmology*.—There is no prior necessity to think that this globe or any other of the stellar bodies need have existed. Simply, as a matter of fact,—of fact invincible, the Universe exists around us in all its glory. So with the whole geological order of things. The note of *a priori* necessity is not to be found in any part of it. All our knowledge of it is of a purely *a posteriori* or contingent nature. In a word, all physical laws are truths of this nature—*a posteriori*, empirical, observational, contingent.

7. *Touching Secondary Cause and Effect*.—So with every kind of secondary cause and effect. For example, "What is true of the ant is true of bacteria. Their active life is suspended by cold, and with it their powers of producing or continuing putrefaction. This is the whole philosophy of the preservation of meat by cold."¹ Again, "Hops act to some extent as an anti-septic to beer. The essential oil of the hop is bactericidal; hence the strong impregnation with hop juice of all beer for exportation."² Again, "the oxygen of the air which is absolutely necessary to support the bacteria of putrefaction, is, according to Pasteur, absolutely deadly to the

¹ Tyndall: *Floating Matter of the Air*, p. 256.

² *Ib.* p. 258.

vibrios which provoke the butyric acid fermentation.”¹ *Cur res sit?* We know not, from any anterior considerations. Simply these appear to be the facts of the case. All natural processes in so far as they stand in the relationship of secondary cause and effect, must be regarded as contingently, and not necessarily, related; so that in our search for contingent truth, we must, in all cases, follow the heuristic method with the most absolute docility, if we wish to be successful in our search.

(B) SOME NECESSARY TRUTHS

Having glanced at the Contingent, let us now proceed to exemplify some necessary truths. “Particularly fitting as objects of scientific knowledge,” says Aristotle, “are first principles and causes; for on account of these, and by means of these, are the other objects of knowledge capable of being made known; but not these by means of those things that are subordinate to them.”² “That which does not admit of being otherwise than it is, we say is . . . a necessary thing.”³ So, Hamilton: “The primitive (*i.e.* necessary) cognitions leap ready armed from Reason, like Pallas from the head of Jupiter. Sometimes the mind places them at the commencement of its operations in order to have a point of support and a fixed basis, without which the operations would be impossible; sometimes they form in a certain sort, the crowning, the consummation, of all the intellectual operations. The derivative or generalised notions (*i.e.* the contingent) are an artifice of intellect,—an ingenious mean of giving order and compactness to the materials of our knowledge. The primitive and general notions (*i.e.* the necessary) are the root of all principles,—the foundation of the whole

¹ *Floating Matter of the Air*, p. 259.

² *Metaphysics*, Bk. i. c. ii.

³ *Ib.*, Bk. iv. c. v. and elsewhere.

edifice of human science.”¹ Necessary truth is made up of the perceptions, laws and requisitions of pure intelligence.

1. *Space*

(1) *The existence of Space.*—Consider Space,—firstly, as to its existence. By the constitution of our minds we are forced to the conclusion that Space necessarily exists. That it should not have existed is unthinkable; just as it is unthinkable that it should ever cease to exist. As Reid says—“We see no absurdity in supposing a body to be annihilated” (he should have said absent, or dispersed), “but the space that contained it remains; and to suppose *that* annihilated seems to be absurd.”² So, Kant:—“If we take away by degrees from our conceptions of a body, all that can be referred to mere sensuous experience—colour, hardness or softness, weight, even impenetrability—the body will then vanish; but the space which it occupies still remains, and that, it is utterly impossible to annihilate in thought.”³ Every one may test this proposition for himself. We cannot efface or impair this perception or notion of space. We have the indestructible conviction of its truth fixed in our intelligence. It forces itself upon us as a necessary truth. Not so with regard to any corporeal thing. The removal or dispersal of anything corporeal, from an atom to the sun, is quite conceivable; and, of course, the removal and dispersal of bodies is happening continually; but the space which they occupy is irremovable and indestructible. It is, indeed, impossible to conceive of space as mobile or destructible. Bodies move only as there is space *through*

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 352. Notice the “caution” offered, *supra*, p. 133.

² *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, ii. 19; *Works*, p. 324. So, also, Spencer, among moderns, *First Principles* (1863), pp. 34–5.

³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 4. We shall see that, unhappily, he seems to forget this proper admission.

which (not *with* which) to move. In our notion of space we have the conviction of the existence of boundless, incompressible, incontractible room.

Kant's blunder regarding Space.—Yet some of the philosophers, apparently, would like to make out that space is removable or collapsible—perhaps like a concertina, or an umbrella, or an opera-hat; whilst Kant, forgetting the categorical declaration which he has made in the passage just quoted, as to the necessary existence of space, proceeds to speak of it according to the exigencies of his illusionary theory, and in flat contradiction of himself, as the “mere form of external sensuous intuition,” and as affording “*per se*, no cognition” to us!¹ Now, to allege that a perception which he had declared to be “utterly impossible to annihilate in thought,” yet “affords *per se*, no cognition,” clearly involves self-contradiction, which Kant, unhappily, failed to notice. Even when he had discovered the *a priori* and necessary, Kant had not the perspicacity to stand firm by those intuitions, but made the gross blunder of trying to criticise them, thus leading himself into the most dismal and hopeless *impasse* in the whole field of speculation. He disastrously failed to notice that he could no more get behind an original judgment than he could stand below his own feet.

(2) *Space is illimitable.*—Briefly consider the spacial property just mentioned—that of boundless room. We have this conception of it in pure intelligence. If we are prepared to admit Euclid's postulates, (1) that a

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 85. See also pp. 33, 34, 42, 91. Indeed, Kant's “philosophy” is consistently self-contradictory and suicidal. As Hamilton says—“His theoretical philosophy, which he first developed, proceeds on a rejection, in certain respects, of the necessary convictions of mankind; while on these convictions, his practical philosophy, the result of his maturer contemplations, is wholly established.” See his *Reid's Works*, p. 792. It would be a great blessing if all the opponents of Common Sense could be induced to take a pledge not to trouble themselves with Philosophy. What would the Institute of Civil Engineers say to a man who should ask admittance to their society on anti-Common-Sense principles!

straight line may be drawn from any one point to any other point; (2) that a terminated straight line may be produced to any length in a straight line; (3) that a circle may be described from any centre at any distance from that centre,—we must at the same time grant that space is necessarily illimitable. If these postulates be not granted, the science of mathematics collapses. But pure intelligence compels us to grant them and, in doing so, compels us to presuppose that space is illimitable. Space “not only retains a firm hold of our belief even when we suppose all the objects that introduced it to be annihilated, but it swells to immensity. We can set no limits to it either of extent or duration. Hence we call it immense, eternal, immovable and indestructible void or emptiness.”¹ Try to imagine a roof with no space above it! A floor with no space below it! A wall with no space beyond it! Try to imagine an insufficiency of space—a want of room, in the universe! You cannot. On the contrary, nothing finite can fill up our notion of space. It is not conceivable that space is any expressible number of miles in extent,—which it would be if it were limited: therefore, it is illimitable. I am convinced beyond question, that there is *room* beyond the dog-star as well as in, or outside my house. I have not this conviction *oculatis testis*, be it carefully noted, but by an *a priori* conviction stamped with the character of necessity. Intellect, I repeat, carries us far beyond the information supplied by the corporeal senses. We can think of space unoccupied by Nature; we cannot think of Nature but as occupying space.

(3) *Space is infinitely divisible*.—And as we can set no bounds to the extension of space, so, in thought, we can set no bounds to its divisibility. By the constitution of our minds, we appear to be forced to the conclusion that it is infinitely divisible. Try to imagine a triangle, or a circle, or a square, or any other figure, as not speculatively divisible!

¹ Reid: *Essays on Intellectual Powers*, ii. 19, p. 324.

(4) *Its geometrical properties are eternal.*—So with regard to the geometrical properties of space generally, we are under an *a priori* necessity of thinking that they cannot alter or be altered. By the constitution of our minds, we are compelled to think that the diameter of a circle must be less than its circumference; the diagonal of a square less than the sum of its four sides, through time and eternity.

The Mary-Stuart Blanket.—Or think of the matter in the concrete. According to the great geniuses (*e.g.* Mill, Buckle, Caird, etc.)¹ who deny the validity of the Common Sense, there is no reason why the Mary-Stuart Blanket at Holyrood (a rag about one foot square) should not be sufficient “wrappage and overall” for a very tall man in a very cold night. Let the anti-Common-Sense men reflect on the situation in a spirit of candour, and I think they will be constrained to confess that such a supposition is necessarily and eternally impossible. So also, it is quite conceivable that a whale should be able to swallow a minnow; but I ask all the Futilitarian geniuses to be good enough to confess that it is necessarily and eternally inconceivable that an ordinary minnow should be able to swallow a full-grown whale.

Nor do we need any induction from particulars to arrive at such truths. We do not need to experiment with a whale and a minnow; we do not ask ten thousand strapping fellows to make trial of the Mary - Stuart Blanket in order that we may report on its shortcomings. If we did, our thousand experiments would not yield that note of necessity which belongs to the truths of which we have been speaking. On the strength of pure thought, we know them beforehand. We proclaim them as primary,

¹ The anti-Common-Sense philosophers would “require the aid of pantomime to tell us what they mean”—if even this expedient would suffice to render themselves intelligible. No kangaroo that ever lived could jump like these men.

a priori, self-evident cognitions, embracing all possible cases.

(5) *Space seems to be uncaused*.—Again, with all reverence, we seem to be under the necessity of thinking of space and its properties as uncaused. As Reid, a reverent man, remarks—"Space is so much allied to nothing or emptiness, that it seems incapable of annihilation or creation."¹ A curious point, this. Whilst we cannot but think of ourselves, or of anything finite, as caused, we seem to be compelled by the very constitution of our minds, to think of space and its properties as uncaused, necessary. Indeed, the notion of necessity implies the absence of cause. Thus Aristotle:—"What we know scientifically is necessary matter. . . . Things that absolutely exist from necessity are all eternal; and things eternal are both uncreated and indestructible."²

Nor can we vary any one of these spacial truths by so much as a hair's-breadth. Not only is the contradiction of any necessary truth unthinkable—*e.g.* that space is illimitable; but the very slightest deviation from that proposition is equally unthinkable. For example, to say that "Space is *nearly* boundless" would be as unthinkable as the proposition, "There is *no* space."

2. Time

By the constitution of our minds we are also forced to conclude that Time exists, has always existed and must always exist. We can think of Time as unoccupied by Nature, but we cannot think of Nature out of Time. We are forced to think of it also, as infinitely divisible. That is to say that whilst, on the one hand, we are unable to

¹ *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*, ii. 19, p. 324.

² *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. vi. iii. 1-2. There are three notes attaching to first principles—those of ultimacy, necessity and inexplicability. v. Veitch's *Hamilton*, p. 57.

think of a maximum of Time, so, on the other hand, we are unable to conceive a minimum of Time. We also think of it as uncaused. Notice again, that not only is the contrary of any of these propositions unthinkable, but the least deviation from, or modification of, any one of them, is equally unthinkable.

Absurdities perpetrated by those who deny the Time-judgment.—Notice the absurdities perpetrated by those who fail to recognise such truths. “Orioli said he had tried to reconcile Genesis with geology on the principle of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, *i.e.* that the creation being *before time* had no succession¹:” —that was to say, I suppose, that you might have birth, growth and death of any organism taking place simultaneously; that you might have fruit on a tree simultaneously with the planting of the seed! According to these speculators, we should, perhaps, have to consider it possible that a man might be older than his father; as, the historians seem to relate, in the case of Ahaziah the son of Jehoram.² Such nonsense can men speak when they depart from Common Sense and refuse to think clearly.

Carlyle's rhapsody on Time.—It is surprising to find that so fine a thinker as Carlyle should have fallen into balderdash on this question. “Deepest of all illusory appearances . . . are your two grand world-enveloping appearances, Space and Time. . . . In vain, while here on earth, shall you endeavour to strip them off.” One cannot even *think* them off: it is a task impossible to thought. He continues:—“You can at best but rend them asunder for moments to look through.” You cannot do anything of the kind, unless you are truthfully able to aver that, through the rending, you can see something that is unfolded by Space and Time. He writes further:—“The curtains of yesterday drop down, the curtains of to-morrow are drawn

¹ Purcell: *Life of Cardinal Manning*, vol. i. p. 388.

² Cf. 2 Chron. xxi. 20 and xxii. 2.

up; but yesterday and to-morrow *both are*." Quite a mistake. To-morrow cannot be spoken of in the present tense; yesterday can no longer be spoken of in the present tense. The one is past irrevocably; the other is a future which we may never see; and we are utterly unable to unite them in the thought of a present now. To-day there may be hope; to-morrow there may be no hope. To-day there is life; to-morrow, death. Did not the great Thomas, in his lifetime, know beyond question that he was growing older every day? All the powers of rhetoric cannot unify to-day and to-morrow into a present now. "Pierce through the Time-element, glance into the Eternal,"¹ he continues. We cannot. Eternity is but infinitely extended Time or Duration—from Everlasting to Everlasting. "Think well," says our wise man, in another part of the same book, and thou wilt find that "Space is but a mode of our human sense; so likewise, Time; there is no space," quoth he, "and no Time."² With all respect to a great man and a great thinker, this is mere senseless rhapsody, inconsiderately adopted from the Germans, and only worthy of "the restless, loud-rattling, slightly furnished head" of one such as his Jacob Dupont. He is but sentimentalising contrariously to the simple, but imperdurable facts of consciousness. "Welcome (even) the beggarliest truth, so it be one, in exchange for the royalest sham." We cannot begin to think but under Space and Time conditions. We can think of nothing apart from, or outside of a *Where* and a *When*. We cannot imagine the possibility even of a spiritual being seated nowhere and in no time—out of space or out of time. It is incogitable and absurd. A philosopher could as easily bite off his own nose, or jump out of his own skin, or stand below his own feet, as cogitate or intellectually discern either his

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. iii. c. viii.

² *Ib.*, Bk. i. c. viii. Strange that he should have suffered himself to be so victimised by Kant on this point.

own soul or his own body, or anything else, situated outside of space or outside of time. Think of the delightful absurdity of the case when a foreigner gravely says to you—as once happened in my own experience: “I shall be delighted to go with you *last* Monday.”

If any one should be rash enough to say—“I can think of a thing outside Space,” I immediately ask—Where? If any one should be rash enough to say—“I can think of action out of time,” I immediately ask—how he distinguishes between the beginning and the end of the action. Thus it is pure nonsense, and not “pure reason” at all, when Kant and his followers speak of space and time as “*mere forms* of external sensuous intuition.” I cannot see how Almighty God even, is to make our perceptions of Space and Time more certain and plain than He has already made them.

Notice also that Eternity—*i.e.* infinitely extended Time, is a thought far transcending the information given us by our bodily senses. Upon the same thought, Sir John Davies rightly founds an argument for the Immortality of the Soul:—

“For even the thought of immortality,
Being an act done without the body’s aid,
Shows that herself alone could move and be
Although the body in the grave were laid.”¹

The revelation to us of endless time is mentally derived—*i.e.* it is intuitive, *a priori*.

With regard to the much and tediously debated question as to how we *originally* came by our apprehensions and conceptions of time and space—*i.e.* whether we have them mediately or immediately, we are unable to speak positively, as, from the nature of the case, it is impossible to apply the experimental method to the determination of the question. Personally, I am of opinion that it is by immediate intuition in both cases, as from the

¹ “Of the Soule of Man,” *Poetical Works*, vol. i. p. 96.

time that I began to think on the subject, I never thought otherwise than I now do ; but whether mediate or immediate, is intrinsically an idle question, the all-important consideration being that those conceptions of space and time, *howsoever derived*, are of such a nature that nobody can, in thought, divest them of their properties any more than he can divest the Multiplication Table of its properties.

But notwithstanding the *a priori* necessity imposed upon us of cogitating space and time as necessary existences, we intellectually discern, at the same moment, that uninhabited space and time would be mere Nox and Erebus ; Darkness and Blindness.

3. *Number and its Properties*

Offenders against Common Sense.—When a man writes an elaborate treatise transcending, or, in any degree, subversive of first principles—*i.e.* of Common Sense ; when he does this either consciously or unconsciously (*e.g.* Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Mill, Spencer, Darwin, or any orthodox theologian of any of the orthodoxies), he is not, *quoad his antagonism to the Common Sense*, worth one respectful thought. Down go all his anti-Common-Sense hypotheses in the first tussle with real life. The steady recognition of this law would enable us to get rid of whole libraries of factitious and foolish volumes. The prime lesson that the philosopher or the theologian has to learn is that his first, second and third duty is to interpret the Common Sense of things—this simply ; and finally, to shape his whole life according to this interpretation. Point out to us one case, either sacred or secular, in which an anti-Common-Sense man—*quoad* his opposition to Common Sense, can be anything but a nuisance to the community.

The anti-Common-Sense men exist in perpetual opposition not only to others but to themselves. They are

continually assuming what they deny, and ignorantly abusing what they have necessarily assumed: thus involving themselves and their followers in endless imbecilities and stultiloquies.

Abuse Nature in the body to a sufficient extent (*i.e.* transgress the laws of Common Sense as they affect the body), and you produce all kinds of horrible diseases. Abuse Nature in the soul (*i.e.* transgress the laws of spiritual Common Sense), and you produce diseases still more deadly.

Nolens volens, neither the idealist, nor the materialist, nor the pantheist, nor the sceptic of any kind, nor the orthodox theologian, can altogether escape in practice, from the operation of the Common Sense, either in contingent or necessary truth. Notice, for example, how entirely obedient we must all be to the laws of number.

All Arithmetical truths are, in their nature, necessary: *i.e.* we are so constituted that we cannot but think of them as true. We are under the necessity of dogmatising on the Multiplication Table and everything involved in it, not only in the abstract but in the concrete. It is well known that with three ordinarily marked dice, three sixes are the highest possible throw. It is indeed written that St. Ghislain, playing with the Devil, threw sevens;¹ but this script cannot be regarded as authentic history. Not even a saint can make a successful attack on the Multiplication Table or anything involved in it. All, inclusive of saints, must submit to it. Throughout all Time and all Space, we boldly assert that it is true and that it cannot but be true.

"I cuist my line in Largo Bay,
And fishes I caught nine:
There's three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line."

Newton could not have improved on this calculation. Mr. John Stuart Mill, indeed, seems to have thought it

¹ Dunbar's *Poems*, vol. ii., note, p. 253.

possible that a catch of nine fishes might yield six for each of the three purposes.¹ Mr. Leslie Stephen and other philosophers who scoff at miracles, try, strangely enough, to accomplish the same miraculous evolution in thought; but they cannot be taken seriously. Nature pronounces her inexorable Dogmas against all such attempts. When Nature speaks—*Conticuerre omnes*. Different schools or sects in this arithmetical branch of learning have not sprung up and cannot spring up—unless it might be in Lunatic Asylums; or unless the Church of Rome, or the Church of Plymouth, or some other enterprising ecclesiastical body should see good to claim a special illumination on the subject. Absolute is the Catholicity of Cocker. Even Don Juan expresses the firm conviction *que deux et deux sont quatre, et que quatre et quatre sont huit*. If Roman "Catholicism" were as convincing as Cocker's Catholicism, we would all, without exception, hasten into the Roman Church at once.

All are sound believers in the Multiplication Table.—Nor does it matter in the very least that some people—many people, in fact, enjoy no facility in moving about through the infinite mazes of the Multiplication Table. Although all arithmetical truths are necessary, it by no means follows that everybody is going to be a first-rate arithmetician any more than that everybody who can hold a brush, is going to be a first-rate painter. But as soon as any person knows it, or even part of it, he appears to admit, forthwith, the necessity, *quoad hoc*, of its laws. And this truth holds good in the concrete as well as in the abstract. No peasant, even the most ignorant, but can

¹ But, he contradicts himself on this point as on many others. "No one, probably," says he, "ever believed that the will of a god kept parallel lines from meeting, or made two and two equal to four; or ever prayed to the gods to make the square of the hypotenuse equal to more or less than the sum of the squares of the sides. The most devout believers have recognised in propositions of this description, a class of truths independent of the Divine Omnipotence."—*Auguste Comte and Positivism*, pp. 47-8.

distinguish between a singularity and a plurality of eggs. Even the peasant has a clear understanding of the Baker's Dozen, and insists upon his rights under it. Let any sceptic, divesting himself of his theories, reflect quietly on such instances by himself, and it will enable him to get rid of the common error of supposing that the ignorance of any individual impeaches the veracity of the common sense—a gross blunder which he and all kinds of illusionists are continually making. He may rest absolutely assured that the intellects of Smith and Brown, however inferior they may be, are constructed on the same essential principles as Newton's.

The Aurakoo Indians.—Nor does it matter in the very least that the Aurakoo Indians, or any other uncultivated persons, may not be able to count beyond 10 or 14. We are all mightily unlearned about most things. The point is that as far as the Aurakoo wanderers *can* count, they are agreed with the rest of mankind. Ask the Hudson Bay Company, or anybody who knows about them. In all their calculations they find that two times two are four. As soon as they can take it in, they will be equally convinced that $4 \times 10 = 40$,—neither more nor less. The intellect honestly consulted will not land us in absurdity—is not subject to absurdity in any latitude or longitude whatsoever. The Catholicity of Cocker is complete although not fully apprehended and comprehended in all his length and breadth by everybody.

Confusion arising from much talk.—Such truths are sometimes darkened and lost sight of, through much talk. As Hobbes remarks—Nature itself does not err, but “as men abound in copiousness of language, so they become more wise or more mad than ordinary.”¹ Study Nature, in all its aspects,—not talk. Most of the writers on Philosophy, unhappily, have mainly studied the speculations, the fungi, the warts and wens and parasitical growths

¹ *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 25.

which have climbed over, and disfigured and disgraced Thought; and have given quite inadequate attention—sometimes no attention at all, to the natural ground of knowledge itself: on which ground alone a true and hopeful epistemology can be built. As James VI. said—“Gif Nature be not the chief worker in this airt” (any “airt”), “Reulis will be bot a band to Nature, and will make you within short space, weary of the haille airt: quhairas gif Nature be cheif and bent to it, reulis will be ane help and staff to Nature”:¹—which counsels are happily addressed and directed “to the docile bairns of knowledge.”

4. *Logic*

So with the formal laws of thought. By the constitution of our minds, we are forced to believe in the rightness and in the eternal rightness of these laws. Of course, as Aristotle remarks, there are certain philosophers who “affirm that it is possible that the same thing may be and not be, and that they really think so. But we have assumed it as a thing impossible in the case of an entity, that it should be and not be at the same time. This is the most firm of all first principles.”² Just so. It is wholly unthinkable that the Law of Identity, or Contradiction, or Excluded Middle can be altered in any part of Time or Space. We are forced to think that these laws must endure eternally. So with all right reasoning from right premisses. “Nothing is produced by reasoning aright, but general, eternal and immutable truth . . . for he that reasoneth aright in words he understandeth, can never conclude an error.”³ Some philosophers, indeed,—such as those to whom Aristotle referred, seem to hold that you can both eat your bun and preserve it intact in

¹ *Ane schort treatise*, etc., Pref. p. 55.

² *Metaphysics*, Bk. iii. c. iv. 1; Bk. x. c. v. 1.

³ Hobbes: *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 665.

the pantry; but I think we may take the liberty of regarding the sages of that school as fragments of chaos, safely neglectable. They seem to stand on the very apex of Merry-Andrewism. We simply request them to come down from that most ridiculous eminence.

5. *Ethics*

We are in a similar position with regard to the Laws of Ethics—of the Just and the Unjust. I think it will be found that the elementary laws of Ethics are *a priori*, intuitive, necessary—not generalised upon an induction from particular cases,—not empirical. Of course, it is premised that the ethical judgment, like all other judgments, must be an honest deliverance. A man must have attained command of, or at least have arrived at, a critical attitude towards not only his prejudices and passions, but towards his very ignorance, before he can properly be said to think in the full sense of the word. By thinking, I always mean honest thinking—thinking to the very best of one's ability,—thinking, as answerable to the Supreme Majesty. It is of the utmost importance that this point should be duly noted—that the consciousness must be honestly read. A man's verdict on any philosophical question, if it is to be of any worth, presupposes that he has thought about and given his judgment concerning it, to the very best of his ability. In this sense, "A wise man (*i.e.* an honest man, primarily) will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." When in any philosophic question, a man's good faith is suspected, we, by that fact, send him out of court. We cannot take into our counsels one who is apparently under the servitude of ignorance, prejudice and passion, without trying to take account of the obliquities of judgment arising under such a servitude. But notwithstanding the fact

that we are all, more or less, labouring under this disadvantage, and though ignorance, prejudices and passions probably play a larger part in our ethical affairs than in any others, we yet find that, upon elemental moral questions, an astonishing unanimity manifests itself amongst the leading men, at least, of the most widely different ages and nations. Just glance at a few of these ethical deliverances.

(1) *Historical Evidence*

Plato.—Plato seems to think that the moral judgment is born with us. Take the following passage :—

“ *Socrates.* You thought, then, it seems, when you were a mere boy, that you knew what is just and unjust.

Alcibiades. I did think so ; and knew it too.

Socrates. At what time did you discover it? For certainly it was not when you merely thought you knew.

Alcibiades. Certainly not then.

Socrates. At what time then did you think you did not know? Reflect, for that time you will never find.

Alcibiades. By Zeus, Socrates, I am not able to tell.”¹

And so on.

Aristotle.—The works of Aristotle abound with recognitions of moral principle. “ Givers are called liberal . . . but those who receive are not praised at all.”² “ The term liberality is applied in proportion to a man’s fortune, for the liberal consists not in the quantity of the things given but in the habit of the giver. And there is nothing to hinder the man whose gifts are smaller, being more liberal, provided he gives from smaller means.”³ Here is the very doctrine of the widow’s mite. The illiberal man “ benefits nobody, not even himself.”⁴ “ The magnanimous man is disposed to bestow but ashamed to receive benefits ; for the former is the part of a superior, the latter, of an inferior ; and he is disposed to make a more liberal return

¹ *First Alcibiades*, 15.

³ *Ib.*, Bk. iv. c. i. 2.

² *Nic. Ethics*, iv. c. i. 5.

⁴ *Ib.*, Bk. iv. c. i. 15.

for favours. It is characteristic of the magnanimous man to ask no favours, or very few, of anybody; but to be willing to serve others. Another characteristic is not to go in search of honour, nor where others occupy the first places . . . and to be inclined to do but few things, but those great and distinguished. He must also necessarily be open in his hatreds and friendships; for concealment is part of the man who is afraid."¹ "All men think that each of the points of moral character exists in us in some manner naturally; for we possess justice, temperance, valour and the other virtues immediately from our birth."² Justice, courage, temperance, magnanimity, liberality, placability, prudence, etc.: all those characteristics are assumed by him to be, without question, beautiful and honourable, whilst the contrary of these are, in their nature, taken to be ugly and dishonourable and hateful. In the several instances of moral depravity which he adduces, he says that both their results and "their indications and the like attendant circumstances are all subjects of shame; for they are disgraceful and make one ashamed."³ About such things we cannot think otherwise when we have once grasped their meaning. Notice this last point. We do not say that necessary moral truth is seen at a glance, any more than we say that any proposition in Euclid is seen at a glance; but what we do say is that *when once seen*, it is perceived to be marked with the note of necessity. There were some very important points in morals which Aristotle did not see;⁴ but concerning

¹ *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. iv. c. iii. 14-15.

² *Id.*, Bk. vi. c. xiii. 1.

³ *Rhetoric*, Bk. i. c. ix. 5-6; Bk. i. c. x. 4; Bk. ii. c. vi. 11.

⁴ There is observable, for example, an ugly moral blur—a failure in moral perception in such passages as the following. "The magnanimous man," he says, "wishes to be superior; and the benefits which he confers he hears with pleasure, but those which he receives, with pain." *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. iv. c. iii. 13. "He is truth-telling, except when he uses dissimulation; but to the vulgar he ought dissemble." Bk. iv. c. iii. 16: passages which bring out the vanity with which the character of Aristotle has been charged.

which, had he once seen them, he would have been as emphatic, I surmise, as he was touching those truths which he did see.

Aeschylus.—Aeschylus has no doubt whatever touching the necessary truth of moral principles. Take that passage—

“The spoiler still is spoiled;
The slayer pays his debt;
Yea, while Zeus liveth through the ages, this
Lives also that the doer dree his weird;
For this is law fast fixed.”¹

Fast fixed! Again—

“The man who does ill, ill must suffer too.”²

In Justice, it must be so. It is unthinkable that any other arrangement could be just. The saying of Plautus that *Lupus est homo homini* is all too true in multitudes of cases, but in so far as man is a wolf to man, he must not expect anything better than a wolf's reward. Let the ill-doer escape punishment—even the ill-doer against human law, and society is shaken to its foundations. But ethical law is much more exacting than our civil or criminal laws. Under these, the maxim runs, *De minimis non curat lex*. Under ethical law, it clearly appears, I think, that no offender can escape. The liar's lie, for example, is primarily a dart thrown at his own soul, sure to hit and sure to wound.

“Thou seest a vengeance voiceless and unseen
For one who sleeps, or walks, or sits at ease:
It takes its course obliquely, here to-day
And there to-morrow. Nor does night conceal
Man's deeds of ill; but whatso'er thou dost,
Think that some God beholds it.”³

The same doctrine over again: no escape from it.

¹ *Agamemnon* 1538-42 (Plumptre's tr.).

² *Fragment*, 267.

³ *Ib.* 269.

Wrong-doing is necessarily followed by punishment. Punishment in some shape or form, is continually treading upon the heels of wrong-doers. It is this necessary truth which seems to render a Universe of free beings practicable. What a den this world would be, if the sinner were unrestrained by law—by the fear of natural consequences as well as of police consequences! It can properly be said by the righteous man only—"I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts."

Sophocles.—Sophocles is equally convinced of the moral necessity of Justice.

"God looks upon the righteousness of man
And his unrighteousness; nor ever yet
Hath one escaped who wrought iniquity."¹

On the other hand, Oedipus asks—

"When hath not goodness blessed the giver of good?"²

Again, Ajax is represented by Sophocles as saying—

"But most be ye my helpers, awful powers,
Who know no blandishments, but still perceive
All wicked deeds i' the world—strong, swift and sure
Avenging Furies, understand my wrong."³

Cicero.—Or listen to Cicero. "There is one true and original law, conformable to reason and to nature, diffused over all, invariable, eternal, which calls to the fulfilment of duty and to abstain from injustice; and which calls with that irresistible voice which is felt in all its authority wherever it is heard. This law cannot be abolished or curtailed, nor affected in its sanctions by any law of man. A whole senate, a whole people, cannot dispense from its paramount obligation. It requires no commentator to render it distinctly intelligible . . . but in all ages and in all nations, it is and has been and will be one and ever-

¹ *Oedipus at Colonus*, 282-4 (Campbell's tr.).

² *Ib.* 309.

³ *Ajax*, 835-8.

lasting. Man is truly man as he yields to this divine influence. He cannot resist it but by flying, as it were, from his own bosom, and laying aside the general feelings of humanity; by which very act, he must already have inflicted on himself the very severest of punishments, even although he were to avoid what is usually accounted punishment.”¹ You can no more stand against the dogmas of conscience in thought, than you can stand upon your feet against a flash of lightning. You can no more dispute the law of conscience in thought, than you can dispute the law of gravitation in body.

Lao-Tsze.—Or, taking a flight to the Far East, listen to Lao-Tsze:—

“Justice is the function of a king,
And royalty an attribute of Heaven,
And what is Heaven-like, comes most near to God:
He who is Godlike has eternal life,
And so his body passes without harm,”²—

which, amongst other things, was to say that, in his opinion, Justice was a thing of eternal beauty and certitude.—I wish our clergy would preach this doctrine every Sunday from their forty or sixty thousand pulpits! It would enormously relieve the strain on our Law-Courts, Jails, Reformatories, Poorhouses, Workhouses, etc.

The Scriptures.—Needless to say the Scriptures are sound on the subject, for the greater part. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” It will be found, I think, that moral science cannot get behind this position. In view of this actual state of the case, think of those to whom the very thought of Duty is, more or less, an *unscientific* notion! Who hold that there can be

¹ Quoted by Brown: *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. iii. pp. 582-3.

² *Tao-Tih-King*, c. xvi.

nothing corresponding to it, or whose principles logically lead to this result, in real life! (*e.g.* Darwin; Spencer, Stephen, Morison, etc.). In passing—How is a man to be a hero, or even a good citizen, on materialistic or dubitative principles? Only, I am afraid, by discarding his principles. I am afraid that Materialism and Determinism and every kind of ethical scepticism can only exist at the expense of morals, and tend to reduce life to a mere *Pugna Porcorum*.

Bacon.—To return, many philosophers of modern times have expressly recognised the necessary truth of moral law. Francis Bacon took conscience to be “a sparkle of the purity of (man’s) first estate,”¹ although, I think, he sometimes takes too low a view of the moral faculties.

Hobbes.—Hobbes says of moral laws that they are “immutable and eternal; for injustice, ingratitude, arrogancy, pride, iniquity, acceptance of persons and the rest, can never be made lawful.”²

Hutcheson.—Hutcheson was convinced that a true scheme of morals “must be drawn from proper observations upon the several powers and principles which we are conscious of in our own bosoms, and which must be acknowledged to operate in some degree in the whole human species.”³ He saw that we possessed a “high, natural pleasure in knowledge without any allurements of other advantage”; that “moral differences of action were discovered by all, even when they considered that no advantage or disadvantage would redound to themselves from them”; that such discernment was “not peculiar to persons of a fine education and much reflection,” but was “shown by the rudest of mankind.” Esteem, he considered, “cannot be raised by any act of the will towards

¹ *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. ii. ; *Works*, vol. i. p. 222.

² *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 145 ; although, otherwise, he had a poor understanding of the subject. See, for example, pp. 87, 88, 115, etc.

³ *A System of Moral Philosophy*, Preface, vol. i. p. xiv (1755 ed.).

an object in which no excellence appears, nor fear where there is nothing formidable, nor anger where there is nothing hurtful, nor pity where there is no suffering, nor gratitude where there has been no evidence of prior benevolence. The natural cause must be presented before any affection can be raised"; and he further denies that these affections arise from any sympathy "subordinate to private interest."¹ Here it might be noted, in passing, that Martineau in alleging that Hutcheson founds our moral nature on the æsthetic,² rather misrepresents him, since, according to the passages just cited, and indeed, the whole tenor of his fine work, he shows that morality is rooted in judgment,—that it is primarily intellectual.

Rousseau.—Rousseau writes—"Cast your eyes over all the nations of the world and all the histories of nations. Amid so many inhuman and absurd superstitions, amid the prodigious diversity of manner and character, you will find everywhere the same principles and distinctions of moral good and evil. The paganism of the ancient world produced, indeed, abominable gods, who on earth would have been shunned or punished as monsters, and who offered as a picture of supreme happiness, only crimes to commit and passions to satiate. But Vice, though armed with this sacred authority, descended in vain from the eternal abode: she found in the heart of man, a moral instinct to repel her. The holy voice of Nature, stronger than that of the gods, made itself heard and respected and obeyed on earth."³ This is a remarkable passage to have been written by so weak a person as Rousseau. He clearly saw that man, despite his superstitions and all his vile degradation, could scarcely lose sight, altogether, of

¹ *A System of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 22-47. (This work represents his system in its mature form.)

² *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 16. Hume also misapprehends Hutcheson. v. Essay "Concerning Human Understanding": *Essays Moral*, etc., vol. ii., note, p. 10.

³ Quoted by Brown: *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. iii. pp. 581-2.

moral principles; that those principles were, in their nature, necessary, indestructible, eternal.

Hume.—Even in the case of Hume his natural good sense is ever and anon rising up and pouring contempt upon his own paradoxical theories. “The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend because I love him: but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.”¹—“When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him.”²—“We have found instances in which private interest was separate from public; in which it was even contrary: and yet we observed the moral sentiment to continue, notwithstanding this disjunction of interests. . . . Compelled by these instances, we must renounce the theory, which accounts for every moral sentiment by the principle of self-love.”³

Reid, Hamilton, etc.—Reid, Hamilton, and the Scottish School generally hold strongly by the “moral imperative.” Brown finely says that “the delight which the mind takes in things divine is an internal evidence of its own divinity.”⁴

Kant.—Kant strenuously upholds the same kind of doctrine. “I assume,” says he, “that there are pure moral laws which determine, entirely *a priori* (without regard to empirical motives, that is, to happiness), the conduct of a rational being, or, in other words, the use which it makes of its freedom; and these laws are *absolutely* imperative (not merely hypothetically, on the supposition of other empirical ends), and therefore in all respects necessary. I am warranted in assuming this, not only by the arguments of the most enlightened moralists, but by the moral

¹ *Essays*, vol. i. p. 155.

² *Ib.*, p. 154.

³ *Ib.*, vol. ii. p. 207, wherein we have a complete refutation of the doctrine which he sets forth at p. 10.

⁴ *Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 12.

judgment of every man who will make the attempt to form a distinct conception of such a law.”¹

The theologians, too, have rightly distinguished between *moral precepts* which regulate the conduct of intelligent creatures and “bind the conscience” in all times and circumstances, and *positive precepts* requiring certain conduct of moral beings, which, prior to their promulgation, were not obligatory;² and the distinction is emphasised by the old juridical expressions, *mala in se* and *mala prohibita*.

Cardinal Manning.—Cardinal Manning advances the same doctrine in the most absolute and admirable manner. These things, says he, are “certainly contained in the *intellectus ipse*. They are anterior to the reports of sense and independent of them. If any one say that they are learned through sense by the teaching of parents, or the social tradition of the world, I answer that the teaching of parents and of the social tradition of the world, is precarious, unequal, divergent, often contradictory, and for the multitude of men, ineffectual; that the untaught are beyond number; but that these primary outlines of self-knowledge are universal, unerring and identical in all normal intelligences; they descend from a higher fountain than sense or reflection, and are found universally where-soever reason or intellect is found.”³ Strong must be the conviction of the existence of such truths when men of all times and countries and religious persuasions, explicitly enounce them.

Hedonists, Utilitarians and Determinists.—On the other side, there are some—from Epicurus down to the Spencers and Morisons of our own time, who have tried to hold that there is nothing general, or necessary, or imperative (*i.e.* nothing *a priori*, spiritual, intellectual, unselfish, generous)

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 489.

² Dwight : *Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 129–30.

³ *Religio Viatoris*, p. 17.

in the nature of morality, but that it is quite a sporadic growth, determinable by entirely physical or mechanical causes, or by purely selfish considerations. Such writers might be roughly classified under three heads,—Hedonists, Utilitarians and Determinists. The Hedonists hold that virtue is resolvable into mere pleasure-seeking; the Utilitarians, that it has no original worth and that it is determined by utility; the Determinists, that life is governed by material or mechanical necessity—that free-will is a delusion: consequently, of course, that there is neither virtue nor vice in the Universe,—that blind fate lords it over everything.

Their theories of no account.—None of these theories are worthy of much attention, inasmuch as they all stand in point-blank opposition to Daylight and Common Sense. If there be a person in the whole world who *really* believes in such theories, he “neither kens the hert o’ a Hielandman nor the honour o’ a gentleman.” That noble person, Evan Maccombich, will look upon him with utter scorn. In showing the paramount authority of Common Sense, we sweep all such systems into the kennel.

(2) *Personal Evidence*

As already stated, the ultimate authority in all high matters is yourself. In view, however, of the great blindness of selfishness, original and acquired, let me reaffirm my caution, that in view of a perfect Lawgiver and a perfect Law, the burden will always rest upon Smith or Brown to show that he has thought, spoken and acted honestly and to the best of his ability. The first precaution incumbent upon Smith or Brown in connection with any question whatever, is that he shall not deceive even *himself*: a warning which has also to be addressed to all the philosophers.

The Personal Test.—Try to think of a thief or a liar

as a respectable person. Try to think affectionately of a cruel person. Try to love a jealous, envious or murderous person; or a person who is prepared to injure his benefactor.¹ In no part of space or time can we think it possible to do such a thing—to reverence or respect thieving or lying; to love cruelty or thanklessness. Even one of Dickens's juries, composed wholly of "in-edicated, vulgar, grovelling wretches," could not possibly do such a thing. That lying, thieving, thanklessness, cruelty, sensual besotment, are wrong, are conclusions independent of historic evidence. That is to say, that such truths only need to be stated in comprehensible terms to be accepted by all candid persons. "Ought" and "ought not" are native declarations of the human soul, which are of boundless moral significance. As one says—"Consider what is behind the terrific weight of the word ought." God, he thinks, is "in that word, and therefore it outweighs all but God."² Our minds as soon as they fully apprehend the purport of such propositions, proclaim them straight away as necessary truths. Hence the fatuity of all opposing schemes of human nature; hence the excellent propriety of sweeping all such schemes into the kennel. The man who calls Duty in question is a nuisance and a bore.

Conscience, our magnetic needle; Reason, our chart.—Conscience has been well called our magnetic needle; Reason, our chart. By these, justice is eternally beautiful; injustice, eternally ugly. We cannot *unthink* either the one proposition or the other. They are necessary truths. We do not admit the least indefiniteness or dubiety about them. They are categorical, imperative. It can never be a beautiful thing for Ahab to take Naboth's vineyard in the manner which the Old Testament records. It must

¹ *Omne dixeris maledictum quum ingratum hominem dixeris.* Publius Syrus, quoted by Stewart: *Collected Works*, vol. iii. p. 357.

² Cook: *Monday Lectures* (2nd Series), pp. 145-6.

be an eternally ugly thing to covet and seize your neighbour's property—the blackness of the ugliness increasing with the malignancy of the circumstances. Smallpox is no more consistent with health of body than lying is with health of mind. Our minds are so constituted as to render any other view of the case unthinkable. No hedonist, even, any more than a man of Common Sense, is going to make a well-known thief or liar his secretary or cashier; nor would our hedonist be fool enough to appoint one whom he knew to be a *consistent* hedonist. Despite his theory, he will try to find an *honest* man for that office. Such propositions should be universally received as *Res Judicatæ*.

Some ethical contrasts.—Truthfulness, Love, Meekness, Humility, Generosity, Temperance, are, intrinsically, beautiful to behold. Falsehood, Malice, Envy, Jealousy, Covetousness, Pride, are spiritual distortions in the view of all persons—and ugliest in the light of clearest thought. We are not prepared to believe such as would assert the contrary. A Universe is not conceivable in which Tiberius, Nero, Caligula and Heliogabalus could be looked upon as beautiful beings. Such a proposition as—"Nero was a good man," is as necessarily and absurdly false as to say that corruption is as fair as purity; disease, as beautiful as health.

"It has been argued that the very conception of evil is that of something strictly incapable of being rationalised; the element intractable to a perfect intellectual conception of things, the surd in human conduct."¹

Valour is intrinsically and necessarily praiseworthy. I don't believe that any wild man of the woods could be found who would glory in, or even feel complacent under a charge of cowardice. We revel in the contemplation of noble valour. Cowardice is always and necessarily base. A society that would build monuments to cowards as such, is inconceivable; but it accords eternally with

¹ Forbes : *Life of Socrates*, p. 188.

moral propriety that valorous souls should, as brave old Barbour expresses it, "aye live forth in memory."

Undoubtedly there are millions of base persons, dead and alive,—millions of base deeds are being continually done in the world; yet who but a lunatic will deny that it has also been the Battlefield and the Grave of Heroes? As such, may it not—to spirits capable of apprehending the wide Universe, be one of the most renowned corners of the wide Universe? I love to think of the hero just dead, *here*, being received elsewhere with great music. But what of the coward and ruffian who has practically resolved his conscience into "a keen apprehension of personal pleasures and pains," just hanged?

Contrast the broad-hearted, charitable man with the narrow-souled cynic; the former, hating evil; trying with all his might to find good, and rejoicing when he finds it. But the poor Cynic! With him, much being bad, all is bad. Doglike he lives upon impurities,—even to the burying of them and scraping-up of them again for food, when his dog-appetite is hungry. He has' a nose for rottenness. Were he admitted into Elysium in his cynical habit of mind, he would immediately proceed to sniff for rottenness (unless dazed for the moment by the glories of the place), and finding none, his occupation in that Realm would be gone.

Contrast the milliner-created woman with her whom King Lemuel describes.

Contrast a Luther with an Agostino Chigi. On the baptism of one of his children, Agostino is reported to have invited Leo X. with the college of cardinals and the foreign ambassadors at Rome, to an entertainment "in which he provided the greatest delicacies, and among the rest, several dishes of parrots' tongues variously cooked. The plates, goblets and vessels were all of wrought silver, and, when once used, were thrown into the Tiber, which

flowed, near the house.”¹ Contrast Luther before the Council of Worms, and Agostino gloating over his dishes of “parrots’ tongues variously cooked”!

Thousands of the human race scarcely seem to be worthy of hound-meal or dog-biscuits; others are so beautiful that this world contains nothing equal to their worth.

Each human heart or soul may be one of two things—either a celestial fountain sending forth dews of blessing and gladness, or an infernal fountain—a fountain of Phlegethon, sending forth withering, scorching and death.

Hedonism, Determinism, etc., in view of such contrasts.—In view of such contrasts, how are we to reduce morality to Hedonism, or Determinism, or Utilitarianism, or to “a single sanction, popular opinion,” or to “the fear of blame and praise from contemporaries”?² To me, it seems quite childish to say that popular opinion—which must never be confounded, of course, with private conviction, is the gauge of morals. It might as well be said that popular opinion is the gauge of the truths of geometry or any other science, as that it is the gauge of moral truth. Personally speaking, I frequently find myself utterly opposed to what is called popular opinion; and so does every man who faithfully thinks for himself. Popular opinion is frequently but another name for popular ignorance guided by popular passion—for popular ignorance and passion organised by sects and factions. Never shalt thou rightly follow a multitude to do evil. Evil were still evil, thieving were still theft, though all the mobs in the world were to say that it was “for the good of the greatest number.” Nay, evil were still evil, though all the demi-gods in convocation were to swear a great oath that it was good. Popular opinion must seek to conform to the truth of Nature; the truth of Nature will never conform to popular opinion.

¹ Roscoe: *Life of Leo X.*, vol. iv., note, p. 339.

² v. W. L. Courtney: *Constructive Ethics*, p. 146.

All legislators should ponder upon this great truth, and be admonished by it.

The right man disregards popular opinion.—The right man does not trouble much to inquire whether any doctrine or policy is popular or unpopular (unless, it may be, to help him to determine what form his own action shall take), but whether it is right or wrong. The earth was steadily spinning round the sun when popular opinion deemed that the sun was spinning round the earth. The right man is trying to do his best work every day without any reference to, or undue regard for, popular opinion; doing noble things, probably, which the public shall never hear about, and which he is not anxious that they should hear about; or deeming *himself*, perhaps, the most critical audience which he has to please, and trying to convert popular opinion to his way of thinking. It is also to be noticed that those very doctrinaires who profess to regard popular opinion as the sanction of morality, have no other object in their own particular polemic than to induce that public, whose opinion they have set up as the standard of morality, to adopt the particular theory which they themselves profess: thus by their practice reducing their theory to absurdity.

It is further to be observed that mere popular opinions and conventions do frequently get gradually condemned by the private and common convictions of men. This, indeed, is the whole story of true Reformation and true progress—the private conviction rising and spreading and throttling and blowing to pieces the popular, surface lies and conventions. That the dishonest may become honest, the foolish, wise, is the labour and the end of Civilisation. In a word, it appears that man is possessed of an original moral faculty; that the task of the moralist lies in unfolding and educating its inherent and inmost dictates—in reading what is metaphorically called the heart; and that right conduct lies in following these dictates, however contrary

they might be to popular opinion : even though this course of conduct should lead to death and indecent burial.

The Right man is superior to secular utility.—So with regard to utility. The utilitarians hold that the laws of Ethics are founded on utility. Herein I think they are wrong. If morality be founded on utility, it is obviously an empirical or a *posteriori* science, generalised from particular instances ; but this account of it does not harmonise with the facts of the case. In Physics, an a *posteriori* science, it is, for example, observed that this and that body are attracted to each other in a certain manner. Further observation shows that this, that and other bodies as well, are so attracted ; still further, that all observable bodies are so attracted ; and finally the grand generalisation is formulated by a Newton, that all bodies attract each other directly as their respective masses, and inversely as the square of their distances. But this is not the method of Ethics, nor of any a *priori* science whatever. The moralist does not generalise his law of honesty from particular instances. The moralist does not first observe that Smith secretly abstracts his neighbour's oranges and that it is an unprofitable action ; that Brown does a similar thing and that his action is unprofitable ; that Jones and Robinson do similar feats and that these are unprofitable ; and then proceed to argue that the practice of secretly abstracting one's neighbour's goods in general, is unprofitable and therefore to be forbidden. Not at all. If he did, such a process would never yield him his moral law. So, instead of entering upon any such fatuous enterprise, he simply consults his intuitions of moral truth, and straightway pronounces the moral imperative—"Thou shalt not steal in any circumstances ; thou shalt be honest in all circumstances" ; and so with respect to every other *bonum in se* or *malum in se*. Murder was unlawful before Cain killed Abel ; drunkenness, a condition to be utterly shunned, long before Noah

became drunk: so that instead of morality being founded on utility, the obvious truth of the matter is that utility is founded on morality. Though in all cases, morality will be found to involve the noblest utility, it is yet prior in thought to utility, just as the laws of thought itself are prior to any argument; and just as the laws of arithmetic are prior to, and presupposed in, all numerical calculations.

Hume's ethical views.—Hume wrote on this subject in an ambiguous and self-contradictory manner,—partly, I surmise, from confusing the province of Jurisprudence with that of Morals.¹ In certain moods, he said that Jurisprudence and the institutions connected with it “arose merely from the necessities of human society”; that “the necessity of Justice to the support of society was the sole foundation of that virtue.”²

Jurisprudence and Ethics.—But even Jurisprudence, though rising—from one point of view, “from the necessities of human society,” is subjectively as well as objectively determined, and contemplates something more than secular utility. The moral constitution of man, it should be observed, precedes the political constitution of society; and this political constitution of society is, at best, but an attempt to give effect as far as possible to the demands of our moral nature. All civilised legislation is but an attempt to prevent the infraction and extend the dominion of prior moral laws. All legislation, indeed, is ostensibly, at least, founded upon the prior demands of moral law; and the most perfect human Legislature conceivable, cannot provide for, and give full effect to, the

¹ The direct intention of Morals is to teach the absolute duty of men in every relation of life; that of Natural Jurisprudence, to teach the political rights of men. Cf. *Reid*, p. 643. J. S. Mill also seems to confuse Jurisprudence with Morality. *Utilitarianism*, p. 82.

² *Essays*, vol. ii. pp. 195–6. Reid refutes Hume's attempt to make utility the standard of Justice, and shows that Justice is the standard of Utility. *Works*, pp. 661–2.

complete demand of moral law. "When is conduct the same?" asks Mr. Leslie Stephen. "If we classify acts as the legislator has to classify them, by objective or external relations, we put together the man who is honest solely from fear of the gallows, and the man who is honest from hatred of stealing. So long as both act alike, the consequences to their neighbours are alike. Neither is legally punishable. But if acts are classified by their *motives*, one is a rogue and the other virtuous; and it is only then that the question of morality arises."¹ This passage finely discriminates between the domains of Jurisprudence and Morality. The highest Jurisprudence is simply the servant of Morality.

The private citizen and utility.—Then as to the attitude of the private citizen in everyday life touching any question of right and wrong, the thought of "supporting society" may scarcely ever enter into his consideration. He inquires primarily into the justice of a case, without any refinements or references at all, perhaps, as to its general bearing upon society.

The utilitarian tape too short to measure man.—If the utilitarian will soberly think over the matter, I think he will find that there is much more in virtue than mere utility. All virtuous acts, indeed, are "useful," in the best sense, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that all useful acts are virtuous. The totality of bakers and brewers are indubitably engaged in a most useful occupation; but it would be a prodigious mistake to suppose on that account, that all bakers and brewers are virtuous men! Nay, rascals without a tincture of virtue in their souls, as far as can be seen, may be found doing *useful* work every day,—sometimes even under constraint, as you may see for yourself if you will take a walk over a convict establishment. Thus it shows a strange lack

¹ *The English Utilitarians*, vol. ii. p. 327. So, Fichte, *Popular Works*, vol. i. pp. 269-70.

of perception to confound utility with virtue. I don't think it will be found that a lifeboat was ever yet manned to face the roaring seas, on bare utilitarian principles. I don't think that it will be found that any band of men ever yet volunteered for a "forlorn hope" on bare utilitarian considerations. Generally speaking, I don't think it will be found that Heroes and Martyrs have shed their glorious blood on bare utilitarian inducements. Danger and the tuck of drum and the great war-pipes appeal to higher characteristics than the utilitarian thinks about. I think it will be found that the utilitarian tape is somewhat too short to measure the full stature of a man—the utilitarian blanket too short and too narrow to keep the whole man warm.

I also think it will be found, on careful investigation, that there is something in what is called "sin," a great deal worse than mere inutility. Does any utilitarian sincerely and soberly think there is nothing intrinsically and necessarily bad in sin,—that there is no depravity, no turpitude in it beyond a want of utility! I think we may safely surmise that no utilitarian soberly thinks that "the seven deadly sins" are mere inutilities. I think we may take it that utilitarian fancies would not harmonise with "that ineffable place of Paul, that proper *ubi* of spirits."¹

When John, for example, stabbed his nephew Arthur and threw him into the Seine;² when Justice was bought and sold regularly—as in the days of Henry II.;³ or when Empson and Dudley were committing their wholesale villainies in the palmy days of Henry VII.,⁴ surely the rankest utilitarian will admit that there was not merely a want of utility in those proceedings, but that all such proceedings were, by their intrinsical nature, unjust, odious

¹ Sir Thomas Browne: *Religio Medici*, p. 31.

² Hume: *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 48.

³ *Ib.* pp. 131-6.

⁴ Bacon's *Works*, vol. v. pp. 166-7.

and damnable to all Eternity. "There was an eminent grocer, one Walter Walker, in Cheapside, whose sign was the Crown, and who innocently and jocosely said that he would make his son heir to the Crown, meaning his shop and business. But this being related to the King (Edward IV.), his majesty ordered him to be beheaded in Smithfield for that imaginary crime on the eighth day of his reign."¹ Does the utilitarian anticipate that Rhadamanthus will merely remonstrate with "his majesty," Edward the Fourth, on the inutility of this decapitation! Indeed I think it will be found by all sincere inquirers that utilitarian language is wholly inadequate for the requirements of life. Trim, as a utilitarian, would be continually finding himself short of language to give due expression to his thoughts and feelings—would die *de chagrin et de misère*, if tied up in utilitarian strappage—would find it quite futile.

I am perfectly confident, for instance, that neither Mr. John Stuart Mill nor Mr. Leslie Stephen had to wallow experimentally in the mire of drunkenness in order to see and understand that intemperance was wrong, ugly, hateful. I am perfectly confident that both these gentlemen had only to *think* of intemperance, either in eating or drinking, to see that it was repulsive and damnable. So with lying, stealing and every other *malum in se*.

Virtue may be tested by the utility of its results.—So I think we should not say that moral theory or virtuous life results from utility, but that the latter results from virtue; which in the concrete, might be defined as action according to fullest knowledge. The tree is known to some extent by its fruits, although the fruit does not make the tree. In this sense, the manifest utility of an action will always be an admirable demonstration of the character of an action, just as the durability and fitness of a machine for

¹ Entick : *History and Survey of London*, vol. i. p. 377.

the purposes for which it was designed, will be an admirable test and demonstration of the knowledge of the engineer by whom it was designed. I think that Mr. John Stuart Mill must have been thinking of something of this kind when in his fine essay *On Liberty*, he wrote—"I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on *the permanent interests of man as a progressive being*."¹ In any case "the permanent interests of man as a progressive being" must be theoretically determined before they can be empirically or historically achieved; thought must precede effective action; the bridge must be properly planned before it can be properly built. In this way, fitness and beauty are manifested in, and are indeed the very efflorescence of, utility. In this exalted sense, the Universe may be looked upon as a vast and glorious utility—the outcome of boundless knowledge and power; and thus, even holiness itself might be regarded as, at once, the root and the sacred bloom of utility. If the utilitarians would accept this interpretation of their doctrine, I don't see why we should not agree with them. It would only remain for us to criticise their use of the word in this wide sense.

Mr. Mill's utilitarian polemic seems to be a confused logomachy.—For instance, in his *Utilitarianism*, Mr. Mill writes—"The happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. . . . In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."² "It maintains not only that virtue is to be desired, but that it is to be desired disinterestedly for itself."³ Needless to say, this constitutes the conception of morality which is most

¹ *On Liberty*, p. 6.

² *Utilitarianism*, pp. 24-5.

³ *Ib.* p. 54.

generally entertained, so that there seems to be no substantive, but only a verbal, difference between him and us. In ordinary languages the word utility and its cognates have been taken to cover secular fitness only, whilst Mill and his school have expanded the meaning of these words so as to make them connote every kind of fitness—sacred as well as secular; all, in short, that we understand by virtue: in which usage it appears to me that they have made a great mistake. Making bricks, for example, is undoubtedly useful, and suffering martyrdom for truth is undoubtedly useful, but it is a sheer linguistic absurdity to suppose that the two operations can be adequately and properly connoted under the term “utility.” Unquestionably, Robert Bruce and John Knox were very useful men, but it would be a gross solecism to speak of them and their kind as “utilitarians” merely; and surely it would be the grossest of all solecisms to speak of Christ, according to Mr. Mill’s suggestion, as a mere “utilitarian”!

“Toll for the brave,
The brave that are no more,”

is a beautiful and noble sentiment. But—“Toll for the utilitarians!”—Therefore it appears that Mr. Mill’s utilitarian polemic is but a confused logomachy.

Man cannot be explained on deterministic principles.—Again, man cannot be explained on deterministic principles. The facts of everyday life cry out against and condemn every form of determinism, whether fatalistic or mechanical. The universal consciousness proclaims man to be a free and, necessarily, therefore, a responsible being. All laws, all religions, all customs, all languages, all literatures, all dictionaries assume him to be a free being as uncompromisingly as they assume him to be possessed of a tongue. No evolutionary or deterministic theory, whatever, can avail a man in any relationship of life. Let the determinist or the evolutionist try to put his theory

in practice in any decent society! Let him experiment with it in any Court of Honour or Justice! If he were bold enough to make such an attempt, he would, of course, immediately meet with a severe reprimand from the judge, and judgment would be pronounced against him; or if the Court should take him to be serious in his determinism, it would forthwith conclude him to be mad, and order a warrant to be prepared for his committal to a lunatic asylum. So, of course, with any utilitarian or hedonist who might propose a desire for "happiness" as a defence of his crime. What is the use of elaborating a theory which, reduced to practice, would throw the perpetrator into this predicament? Even the most ignorant should be intelligent enough to know his own ignorance and refrain from committing such absurdities. It is a great pity that a naturally sensible man like Mr. Herbert Spencer did not notice and meditate upon the dreadful dilemma arising out of his theories, and save us from all that voluminous and dreary jargon of his about "integrated nervous shocks"; for the moment he forgets all about these "shocks," he speaks in open contravention of them and manifests scientific ability. These brief considerations should be sufficient to destroy every form of determinism and render its resuscitation impossible.

And thus, just as we have seen that the utility of a theory in practice, is the objective proof of its worth, we now see that the inutility of a theory is an objective proof of its worthlessness. And what applies to all theories, naturally applies to all things.

The moral judgment not explicable by fear, nor by love of praise.—Nor is the moral judgment to be explained by fear, as some have alleged. The poet Young was execrably wrong when he wrote—

"Rewards and punishments make God adored,
And hopes and fears give Conscience all her power."¹

¹ *Night Thoughts*, vi. 1175-76.

It is a most depraved view of the case. It insults human nature to the very marrow of its bones, and represents God Himself as a mere briber and corrupter of His creatures. It really represents sin as the origin of virtue; the crooked, as the origin of the straight. One might be excused for thinking that Young had just returned from some drunken night-revel when he penned that particular night-thought. A clearer consideration of the subject would have shown him that it is the fashion of conscience to pronounce its most royal judgments against proffered rewards, and in the very teeth of truculent authority.

Edmund Spenser commits a similar offence against human nature and decency when he writes in the *Tears of the Muses*—

“For if good were not praised more than ill,
None would chose goodness of his own free will”;¹

which was to say that there was no virtue in valour or integrity but in its being praised! It was a sentiment worthy of an unrepentant thief and wholly unworthy of Edmund Spenser. He showed a truer conception of the nature of virtue when he spoke of—

“The antique use which was of yore
When good was only for itself desired.”²

Burns took the right view of the case when he wrote—

“The fear o’ hell’s a hangman’s whip
To hand *the wretch* in order;
But where you feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a’ side pretences;
And resolutely keeps its laws,
Uncaring consequences.”

This is a graphic and accurate representation of the central principle of moral truth. Hell and the fear of it

¹ *Tears of the Muses: Calliopc.*

² *Faerie Queen*, Bk. v. Int. 3.

are for the correction of the wretch, the criminal, the vile slave of Lubberdom. The holy voice of Nature is the monitor of the true man; who, on fit occasion, has been known to look pitifully and majestically even upon the hireling who was about to hang him. His chief desire is for the eternal beauty of Righteousness, without which all else is less desirable. Thus saw the clear-eyed Bard:—"Be not just, be not religious, through vile fear, but for the greatness, the beauty, the everlasting majesty of Righteousness." Thus it should be the constant aim of a man to possess something not only of a terrestrial, but of a celestial character. If there is not something of the celestial about him here, how can he reasonably hope to have anything celestial about him Hereafter!

Theological bearing of the moral judgment.—By way of parenthesis, I would respectfully request the attention of the clergy to the nature of the moral judgment herein set forth. Many of them talk as if salvation were to be accomplished by a timely and neat little business arrangement with the Church, negotiable through them personally; and they warn you that if you don't make that timely and neat little arrangement, you must inevitably be damned. Salvation is a negotiable saving of your skin; Damnation is the hot and eternal drubbing thereof, arising from your having temerarily neglected to make the timely and neat little business arrangement aforesaid. Christendom was pervaded and blasted by this lie for ages, and is still, to a large extent, pervaded and blasted by it.¹ This

¹ For example, in his book on *Russia*, Mr. Mackenzie Wallace writes—There is a "strong tendency both in the clergy and in the laity to attribute an inordinate importance to the ceremonial element of religion. Primitive mankind" (would that it were only the primitives!) "is everywhere and always disposed to regard religion as simply a mass of mysterious rites, which have a secret magical power of averting evil in this world and securing felicity in the next. To this general rule the Russian peasantry are no exception, and the Russian Church has not done all it might have done, to eradicate this conception and to bring religion into closer association with ordinary morality." (Is not this a sin more or less common to

accursed doctrine, however well meant, is still impressed upon men and women in many places, to make them "Christians." What happens? Millions of them, indeed, enrol themselves as Christians; but what kind of Christians? There's the rub. Not the kind of Christians, I fear, that Christ wanted,—beautiful in their ways, and holy in their works, but frequently, mere creed-reciters and genuflectors, to whom certain foolish physical observances are of more account than all the moral salvation attainable through noble living. We actually find millions of "Christians," in our own time, hoping, apparently, to get round to the soft side of Omnipotence by the sacrificial eating of herrings on Fridays! In view of such spectacles, we may well apostrophise the primal Gardener—*O Adam, quid fecisti!* Obviously this is a matter which imperatively demands the very serious attention of all clergies—the multitude, namely, of merely nominal Christians, contrasted with the appalling scarcity

all the Churches? Note the results in Russia.) "Hence such incidents as the following are still possible. A robber kills and rifles a traveller, but refrains from eating a piece of cooked meat which he finds in the cart, because it happens to be a fast day! A peasant prepares to rob a young *attaché* of the Austrian Embassy in St. Petersburg, and ultimately kills his victim, but before going to the house he enters a church and commends his undertaking to the protection of the saints! A housebreaker, when in the act of robbing a church, finds it difficult to extract the jewels from an Ikon, and makes a vow that if a certain saint assists him, he will place a rouble's-worth of tapers before the saint's image!" pp. 61-62. Unreformed man may thus be quite an infra-brutal creature, whilst at the same time, he supposes himself to be dowered with all the privileges of "the Church." "And this attaching of enormous importance to trifles was not confined to the ignorant multitude. An Archbishop of Novgorod declared solemnly that those who repeated the word 'Hallelujah' only twice at certain points in the liturgy, 'sing to their own damnation,' etc., pp. 306-7. "If the Orthodox Church could make the peasantry refrain from the inordinate use of strong drink as effectually as it makes them refrain during a great part of the year from the use of animal food; and if it could instil into their minds a few simple moral principles as successfully as it has inspired them with a belief in the efficacy of the Sacraments, it would certainly confer on them an inestimable benefit," pp. 539-40.

of noble, religious persons. It does not, apparently, occur to any of the Churches to consider this fact sufficiently; but contrariwise, they complacently take poll-rolls of their church members, and triumphantly record the vast numbers of persons who have attended their meetings and participated in their communion services, whilst paying very little regard to the characters of the communicants. Such triumphs, it is to be feared, are of no very high account. In a good many cases, perhaps, they may only be making the Powers of Evil jubilant.

Spiritual Salving.—Having realised what Religion is not, all our clergies should endeavour to realise what it actually is, namely, spiritual or moral renovation,—vitalising the moral sense,—seeking the highest knowledge, and striving to live according to it. This I take to be the high motor-thought of the original Christian scheme. High motive is essential to the accomplishment of high work. It is impossible that high work should spring from paltry motive. Spiritual salving is the highest of work: it cannot be accomplished but under the inspiration of the highest of motives. Now it is such motives that the clergy of all denominations ought particularly to press upon the attention of their hearers. They should continually dwell upon the intrinsic and everlasting beauty, greatness and majesty of being religious; incite their hearers, if possible, to hate everything that is base and to love everything that is noble—to build up a great manhood, intrinsically glorious in itself and glorious in the sight of God. Let us strenuously try to fill the world with fruit grown from this kind of seed.

The moral judgment and repentance.—But whilst Virtue is eternally beautiful and vice ineradicably ugly, we have also to remember that in Ethics, repentance, heart-sorrow for sin, is as permanently estimable, and requires the offended just person to be merciful and

forgiving to the repentant. If you do wrong to me but come to me repentant, and I am convinced that you are repentant, it is nothing less than my duty, from the ethical point of view, to forgive you. If I did not thus show mercy, my justice would forthwith degenerate into paltry cruelty and despotism. I should thereupon find myself contemptible in my own eyes, and ugly, presumably, in the sight of the Gods. Mercy, like Justice, seems to be eternally right and beautiful when once the necessary condition precedent,—namely, the heart-repentance of the wrong-doer, has been established—as beautifully taught, for example, in the parable of the Prodigal Son. If it were allowed to have its just and beneficent sway, this one great law would promptly sweep thousands of volumes of theology into the Limbo of Vanity.

Mercy is consistent with Justice.—But of course,—*ceteris paribus*, the man who has to repent, cannot be the moral equal of him who has no need of repentance—nothing to repent of. *Ceteris paribus*, the man who has least to repent of, must always be superior to him who has need for large repentance: wherein again, the necessary character of Justice asserts itself. Here, however, the point to be specially noticed and laid to heart is that Mercy is not inconsistent with Justice; but that, on the contrary, true Mercy is always consistent with Justice.

There can be no proxy in morals.—In view of the truth just stated, it is apparent that there is no call for a proxy in the settlement of any case of conscience. Indeed, it is necessarily true that there can be no proxy in Morals. A can make sacrifices for B, but by the necessary nature of moral law, A cannot transfer any part of his merit to B. A may nobly influence B—may even exercise a saving influence upon him; but in morals, A's work can never be accepted as a condonation of the sins of B. B's only

chance is to repent of his sins and reform his life. Salvation cannot be had cheap. Miserable wretch! Dost thou suppose that thou mayest achieve freedom and become a man as a pauper and a parasite.

And conversely, the sins of B can never, in justice, be vicariously visited upon A. Our moral constitution forbids the entertainment of such a thought. It is wholly inadmissible in Ethics.

A great theory was set up in early ages in *unconscious* opposition, perhaps, to this great doctrine of the necessary nature of moral truth,—a theory which has prevailed in, and confounded, Christendom for many centuries. But let us hope that the time is now at hand when men at large shall realise (as they must do, if they will only give themselves a fair chance) that moral truth is in its nature intuitive and *a priori*, and of the same absolute degree of necessity, as logical, arithmetical and geometrical truth. Let us hope with Professor Iverach that in the sphere of Religion, “the right to look at the self and the world apart from the presuppositions of the ruling system,”¹ is about to be granted. Even Hobbes (an opposing theorist) admits the whole case when off his guard. “I doubt not,” says he, “but if it had been a thing contrary to any man’s right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two angles of a square, that doctrine should have been, if not disputed, yet, by the burning of all books of geometry, suppressed, as far as he whom it concerned was able.”² In a word, it is only misapprehension or misguided passion that can deny the necessary nature of moral truth.

Errors of the Churches.—No Church has yet ventured to differ from the doctrines of vulgar intuition on the question of Arithmetic, but they do equally absurd things. On the claim of supernatural illumination they not only give the lie to the clamant testimony of our inferior

¹ v. *supra*, p. 37.

² *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 91.

organs, our noses, eyes, fingers, palates, etc., but they give the lie to our intuitions of necessary truth. Under claim of supernatural illumination, they tell us that one body can be in thousands of different places at the same moment; and in plain opposition to necessary truth, they declare that A can transfer his moral merits, or part of his moral merits, to B—that, in other words, A can stand proxy for B in morals. Such a transference, I repeat, is, by the nature of moral law, necessarily impossible,—just as much impossible as that $2 \times 2 = 5$. B may communicate contagion to another—alas, too easily; but he can no more *transfer* his guilt than he can *transfer* his bodily diseases and debilities. Conversely, A cannot take over B's sins any more than he can take over his apoplexy.

Now, if some religious society, on the assumption of a special illumination, should dare to differ from the vulgar reading of the Multiplication Table, and to denounce as arithmetical heretics all those who, in such circumstances, yet maintained the vulgar conviction touching that clear compendium (so far as it goes) of arithmetical truth, such conduct would not be less ridiculous nor less reprehensible than the conduct of the Churches has been in bringing ecclesiastical dogma into conflict with the necessary dictates of moral truth; and I may add without fear of contradiction, that no merchant with a well-balanced mind and a stout heart, who might thus be arithmetically denounced, would yield to the denunciation; that, in spite of it, he would be proud to remain under the imputation of arithmetical heresy rather than depart from the common sense of the matter; and that he would quietly go upon his way rejoicing in his unalterable intuition and conviction that his vulgar reading of the Multiplication Table was the true one.

It should further be laid to heart, as already indicated, that it would actually, if possible, be less irrational to set aside the testimony of our corporeal faculties in deference

to ecclesiastical authority, than it is to give up, on the requisition of that authority, our intuitions of moral truth, inasmuch as the corporeal senses only acquaint us with contingent truth, whereas the moral judgment informs us of truths that are necessary. Yet, we poor unfeathered ganders and geese, men and women, are continually perpetrating this act of faithlessness and stupidity, surrendering our glorious and God-created intuitions of moral truth on the demand of persons as weak as ourselves. From the briefest honest glance at the matter, it should be seen that this ecclesiastical claim of enjoying supernatural illumination contrary to the Common Sense of things, is not only grossly unscientific, but a disastrous usurpation of spiritual authority, which should in no case be admitted by any God-fearing and self-respecting human soul. Our responsibility does not lie towards any ecclesiastic whatever, living or dead, but towards the Lord of the Universe alone, on the basis of necessary moral truth.

Romanism and illumination.—I always wonder why the Romanists with their very special claim to supernatural illumination, do not pronounce boldly, for example, on Darwinism. If specially illuminated, why should they hold themselves “in reserve” on that question? Why talk of “caution” about it? The special illumination which they enjoy ought, surely, to do away with the necessity of reserve and caution in a question so important—cutting, as it does, at the very tap-root of our moral nature; otherwise, what is the use of their special illumination? If their claim was good and their judgment infallible, as our Romanist friends hold it to be, it would only remain for us to ask in any scientific theological difficulty—What does the Church of Rome say about it?

Again, with regard to this claim of ecclesiastical illumination, in what particular head or heads is it supposed to burn? Who possesses the *consciousness* of it in particular? Is it blazing in the pope’s head only, or in

each priest's head as well? I notice that Cardinal Manning has pronounced against Darwinism with all his might—unanswerably, I think.¹ How did his pronouncement square with the Church's "caution" and "reserve"? At any subsequent moment, he might have been compelled to eat the leek,—to swear that Darwinism was divine.

No moral deliverance by proxy.—But to return to the main question, it appears that every free being has moral responsibilities which cannot, by any kind of subterfuge whatever, be removed from his own soul. He is born subject to an obligation to perform duties to himself, duties to his equals, duties to beings inferior to himself in any respect, and duties to beings superior to himself in any respect. None of these duties, though they may be commutable in particulars, are transferable in principle. It is more expedient and, indeed, necessary, for our friend Peter Smith to acquit himself, directly or indirectly, of his moral obligations to the best of his ability, than to eat his own dinner. Indeed, he may sometimes transfer his own dinner to the eating of another person with advantage to both parties; but in no case can Peter properly ask another person to be heroical or honest in his stead, or to stand a whipping due unto his own skin alone. He must clearly understand that he can never hope to stand successfully at the Bar of Rhadamanthus in another person's shoes. In the last resort, thou, Peter, must,—by the nature of moral law, and in thine own particular person alone, stand the whipping due unto thee. Nay, Peter, thou wouldst be but a poor knave if thou didst wish for any other kind of deliverance—*e.g.* that the whipping due unto thee should be inflicted upon another. Thy very salvation may depend upon thy whipping; for morals grow under a due whipping properly taken. Thou art doomed if thou dost not make a bold effort to bear the lash which may be due to thine iniquities. Would to God that we could have an invasion of rational

¹ See his *Religio Viatoris*.

Moodies and Sankeys to preach this Gospel throughout the length and breadth of the land! Glorious results would be achieved by them.

In a word, I repeat, there can be no proxy in Morals. No free being can shuffle out of his moral responsibilities or transfer them to another. Fortunately the trick is impossible. A man's sin remains as untransferable as heart disease. It is to be eradicated, if at all, by holy living, and in no wise transferred by theological formulary. Let all the Churches look to it.

Conclusion of the matter.—From which various considerations I think it may safely be taken that the beauty of goodness is necessary and eternal, and a thing more or less evident to all inquiring persons of adult and normally sound minds. Let a man appear before any crowd, even, who really think that he is a hero, and they will almost inevitably receive him with spontaneous and irrepressible enthusiasm. It matters not though by some mistake in judgment or legal wrong-doing, he may have to appear as a criminal in a police court. Take the case of the gallant Dr. Jameson of Transvaal fame. When he appeared at Bow Street, the spectators, made up of all kinds of people, rightly discerning, I think, that they had a brave man in front of them, fond of flying the British Flag, could not and would not refrain from audible expression of their admiration, notwithstanding all the magisterial and feeble talk of the presiding magistrate. All the red-tape in Police Magistrate Bridge's possession,—all the official impassivity which he could command, all the magisterial objurgations which he could pronounce, could neither suppress the noble emotion raised among the spectators at the appearance of the brave man in the dock, nor strangle its utterance. The crowded court cheered Jameson again and again in spite of the magistrate. He could no more repress the true and right feeling among the spectators than a fly on the muzzle of a gun could prevent it from being discharged.

Now I regard such a general manifestation of high enthusiasm in the presence of one deemed to be a hero, as bearing irrefragable testimony to the glorious fact that human nature at heart, loves the noble and despises the base. Preachers and philosophers do not, I think, sufficiently realise the existence of this majestic characteristic in human nature, nor utilise it as they ought in the interests of the beautiful and the noble. Nay, our orthodox theologies are disastrously founded upon the base in human nature, not, as they ought to be, upon the noble. They all too much assume that man requires to be *rescued* simply, whereas the real want of the poor soul is that he should, as well as possible, be educated, drilled, disciplined, nobly inspired to achieve great work. As Fichte says—"To subject all irrational nature to himself, to rule over it unreservedly and according to his own laws, is the ultimate end of man."¹ I venture to think that it would be a happy thing for the world if our clergy as a whole would accept these suggestions, and labour for the moral advancement of mankind upon the basis which they alone offer for the prosecution of that glorious enterprise. I repeat—O, for an invasion of rational Moodies and Sankeys!

A word also to the philosophers. Don't try to confuse a plain but infinitely important matter with talk of savage tribes, evolution, monkeys, chaetopod worms, fishy ancestry, and so forth, nor with the schemes of utilitarians and hedonists. These, with the fish philosophers, have no deliverance to offer to Peter Smith. The united schools of them are unable to offer him any deliverance whatever, either from the claims of the Moral Law, or from the claims of any other law of any importance.

The writer or teacher of false, ethical, or religious doctrine should try to realise the awful fact that he is a public calamity, whose magnitude will be proportionable

¹ *Popular Works*, vol. i. p. 156.

to the turpitude of his falsehood multiplied by the success of his propaganda; whilst the teacher of ethical and religious truth may rejoice in the thought that he is a public blessing, whose magnitude will be proportionable to the beneficence of his doctrine multiplied by the success of his efforts to teach it.

It is to be understood, then, that the Realist in morals, as in all other branches of science, addresses his doctrines to everybody who would be legally regarded as of sound mind,—that is, to everybody who, as a transgressor of laws, would be haleable before a police magistrate. The Realist makes his whole appeal to the Common Sense of mankind.

We oppose ourselves to all who try to confuse the eternal right with the eternal wrong—who, theoretically, try to obliterate the distinctions, obtrusively visible, between the supernal and the infernal. We oppose ourselves to all who, in the abused names of philosophy or theology, play into the hands of the Devil and dig pits for the holy.

6. *Efficient or Primary Cause—Cause-Proprie*

We now come to consider the question of Cause. In the first place, let us refresh our minds as to the character of the distinction between necessary and contingent truth. "The truths that fall within the compass of human knowledge . . . may be reduced to two classes. They are either necessary and immutable truths whose contrary is impossible; or they are contingent and mutable, depending on some effect of will and power, which had a beginning and may have an end." That all the radii of a circle are of equal length "depends not upon the will and power of any being. It is immutably true, and the contrary impossible." But that "the sun is the centre about which the earth and the other planets of

our system perform their revolutions, is a truth; but it is not a necessary truth. It depends upon the will and power of that Being who made the sun and all the planets, and who gave them these motions that seemed best to Him.”¹ “In the phenomena of mind alone can we be conscious of absolute necessity”;² whilst, however great may be the number of merely “particular experiences in support of a universal truth, we should never be able to assure ourselves for ever of its universality by induction, unless we knew its necessity by reason. The senses may register, justify and confirm these truths, but not demonstrate their infallibility and eternal certainty.”³

It is curious to see how persistently obtuse some people are on this subject. The psychological work of Mr. Herbert Spencer, amongst others, is pervaded by the gross error that our conceptions of necessary truth are generated by a multitude of repeated experiences. He could not make a greater blunder. The necessary truths seem to be, as it were, enfolded in the mind, ready to be unrolled and brought into clear consciousness whenever the attention is fully turned upon them. The sun has not ceased to rise every day upon the human race, as far as the records inform us, from the dawn of history; but yet that the sun will rise every day, is a proposition which has utterly failed to petrify, and never will petrify, into a necessary truth. The tides have risen and fallen twice a day through the ages, but yet we cannot and never shall be able to affirm that they will necessarily so rise and fall in all time coming; whilst, on the other hand, a single demonstration of any necessary truth—say that “any two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third side,” or the simple proposition that “lying is base,”

¹ Reid : *Works*, p. 441.

² Hamilton : *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 194. Better to say the *pronouncements* of mind.

³ Leibnitz : *Nouveaux Essais* : quoted by Hamilton, *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 358.

when duly considered, straightway convinces us that it is a necessary truth and that such it must be for evermore. An infinitude, even, of mere repetitions of any process could not yield the notion of necessary truth. It is a pity that all our speculators do not apprehend the distinctive and unmistakable notes of the necessary, finally and for ever.

Bearing in mind these ineradicable distinctions subsisting between the necessary and the contingent, let us now proceed to consider the nature of Cause.

(1) *Everything Contingent has necessarily a Cause.*—I begin with the proposition that "Everything contingent has necessarily a cause." That is to say, we necessarily regard it as an effluence from a pre-existing Efficiency,—an actual Producing Power.

The evolutionist and beans.—Let us study this proposition. For example, we are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that this planet shall grow beans. It is perfectly conceivable that it might not have grown beans. We have no difficulty whatever in thinking of it as a beanless planet—just as we have no difficulty in supposing that the moon may be a beanless planet. Indeed, in all probability, that planet is beanless,—the astronomers, generally, asserting that its physical condition is not conducive to beans, as we know them. But, as regards this earth, we know as a matter of fact, that it does grow beans; and thus we have the contingent truth that the earth yields beans.

Now a little further. *How* does the earth yield beans? You gaily answer—"We prepare suitable soil; therein we sow seed-beans; that seed germinates, sending roots below and a green spike above; the sun shines upon it and the rains of Heaven fall upon it, and it grows up into a stalk which duly produces leaves and blossoms; which in turn develop into pods containing the beginnings of other beans; which duly expand and grow into ripe

beans—wholesome and pleasant food for horses and cattle.” Good, but you have only stated a series of contingent truths or facts—only a series of what are properly called secondary causes. Whence the seed-bean? “From another bean, of course.” Whence that other bean? “From an older bean, to be sure.” Just so; but this only carries us back to an indefinite regress of seed-beans. Whence the primal bean? Up to this point, you have not touched Cause-*Proper* at all. You have only assumed beans,—dealt with a series of secondary causes or *media*; whilst the main question remains unanswered—“Whence the primal bean?”—“What the cause of it?” A question which the native inquisitiveness of the human mind prompts it to ask, whatever be the school of thought to which it belongs.

Now with regard to the mere historic descent of the bean, it is possible, perhaps, to think of it as sprung from the “generalised ancestor,” dear to the evolutionist: that is to say, from the same original ancestor which they have hypothesised as the parent of the potato, the turnip, the Barcelona nut, the cocoa-nut, the cherry, the pumpkin, and indeed, of every other member of the vegetable kingdom. It is possible, I say, to think this, without necessary stultification of thought, as the evolutionists do; just as they profess to think, and seem to have great joy in the thought, that the man and the monkey, the elephant and the *pulex irritans*, or flea, are descended from a generalised ancestor, trying to congratulate themselves the while, that they are unprejudiced and scientific witnesses. For my own part, I cannot but regard this evolutionary creed as extravagantly unscientific; as unscientific as some of the wildest of theological creeds, and not becoming a full-grown man to profess. But accepting it as thinkable,—assuming it to be a historic fact that the bean and the cocoa-nut had a “generalised ancestor,” we have simply proceeded backwards from the primal bean and the primal

cocoa-nut through an indefinite and far-reaching regress of *not*-beans and *not*-cocoa-nuts up to the "generalised ancestor" of the bean and the cocoa-nut; *but we have made no nearer approach to the solution of the question of the efficient CAUSE of beans and cocoa-nuts*: we have only spoken about their historic lineage. The question now arises—whence the "generalised ancestor" of the bean and the cocoa-nut?—a question which necessarily puts the evolutionist *au bout de son latin*.

Thus the evolutionist is compelled to go still further back than the "generalised ancestor," which he has hypothesised. That "generalised ancestor," he clearly sees, could not have jumped out of nothing,—being compelled by his mental constitution to believe, like other people, in the great natural Dogma—*ex nihilo, nihil fit*; so he tries to cut the difficulty by setting up a still more "generalised ancestor"—parent not only of beans and cocoa-nuts, but also of men and monkeys, elephants and fleas. In short, our evolutionary friend, with a look of immense sapience on his countenance, briefly sums up his science thus—"Everything starts from protoplasm":¹ thinking, fond soul, that he is making a very scientific start. But still he is in the toils of the Infinite; he is no nearer the explication of efficient Cause. Granted the protoplasm, the inquiring human mind still asks—"Whence the protoplasm?" and "Why should protoplasm give rise to beans and monkeys?" At highest his protoplasm is nothing higher than a secondary cause, a medial process, possessed of no true causal efficiency; for, like the "generalised ancestor," protoplasm cannot jump out of nothing. In turn, it must have had a cause. The human mind

¹ Voysey, quoting correspondent, *Theism as a Science*, p. 131; "A series of fundamental correspondences between plant and animal which point to the merging of their apparent differences in one community of origin." Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, p. 70; "protoplasm from which, by successive modifications, slow in their operations, the teeny variety of things has been developed." *Ib.* p. 148.

cannot rest upon mere medial processes,—not if you drew them out to a duration or history of millions, or billions, or trillions of years. With your alleged medial processes—evolution, and so forth, you are not really accounting for the true and sufficient origin of anything: you are merely throwing dust into our eyes and into your own as well. All your medial processes put together, do not amount to the fraction of a Cause-*Proper*. Let your line of medial processes, I say, be extended for millions, or billions, or trillions of years, and yet you have not touched the Cause,—the pre-existing Efficiency,—the Producing Power, whose existence the human mind desiderates and asserts as necessary to account for the existence of finite or contingent things. Strange spectacle! It would probably baffle most evolutionists to expound the actual origin, the true aetiology, of a fit of sneezing, and yet they profess to expound the very origin of species, and even of life itself!

The man of Common Sense and beans.—So far the evolutionist and beans. With respect to this admirable product, let us now take the attitude of the man of Common Sense. He sees, at a glance, that beans are as inexplicable as eggs. He knows that he has no biological data whatever, upon which to build any biological history of beans. He does not concern himself very much even about the Primal Bean, beyond intelligently wondering about it. Still less does he hypothesise a “generalised ancestor” for it, or bethink himself of a protoplasmic start for that “generalised ancestor.” All that kind of talk, he sees at a glance, is feebler than the wail of wet-mouthed infancy. The immense superiority of the man of Common Sense over the evolutionist, lies in the fact that he possesses a quiet, intelligent, manly knowledge of his own ignorance. “I ken that I dinna ken.” But whilst he knows nothing whatever about the historic origin of the bean, and lucidly knows that he knows nothing about it, he also finds himself compelled to assert, by the constitution of his mind, that it

necessarily had a cause. He cannot satisfy himself with the thought that it is composed of certain chemical elements ; or that it grew out of the ground, watered by the rain and warmed by the sun. All these, he sees, are but secondary causes, mere medial processes ; above and beyond which his mind boldly asserts, and cannot keep itself from asserting, the existence of an Efficient Cause : that is to say, of a Power, capable of ordaining and giving a historic beginning to the bean.

The ultimate nature of Cause.—So it is in connection with any other finite or contingent truth, *e.g.* that trees grow out of the ground. Here is an apple-tree flourishing beautifully. The fact of its being planted in the ground does not impress us with the notion that such a fact in itself is possessed of causal efficiency adequate to produce the structure, life and beauty of the tree ! Telegraph posts are planted in the ground, and they do not produce, nor make any approach to producing, apples. At the highest, the ground is but part of the medium, or means, through which the tree grows. Neither a medium nor a multitude of media form a cause. In thinking of a cause, we do not think of mere means, but also of a Power which pre-determines that the means shall have certain effects. Means seem to be the middle term between the Power or Cause and the effect. To express it in another way, *the whole series of means and effects, taken together, may be regarded as nothing more than the whole effect of a hidden but necessary Cause.* There is not in our minds any notion of a necessary efficiency as existing in mere means. The efficiency lies in the inscrutable Power which determines the effect through the means : the means themselves do not yield us the notion of causal efficiency. The efficiency must be *imposed* on the means by an inscrutable Power preceding them. That inscrutable Power conforms to our notion of Cause.

Limitations of natural science.—All that the natural

philosopher or scientist can do is to find the *laws*, or general means, by which the events of Nature are regulated. "We deceive ourselves if we conceive that we can point out the real efficient *cause* of any one of them. But supposing that all the phenomena that fall within the reach of our senses were accounted for from general laws of nature justly deduced from experience ; that is, supposing natural philosophy brought to its utmost perfection, it does not discover the efficient cause of any one phenomenon in Nature. The laws of Nature are the rules (nothing more) according to which the effects are produced ; but there must be a cause which operates according to these rules. The rules of navigation never navigated a ship. The rules of architecture never built a house. Natural philosophers by great attention to the course of Nature have discovered many of her laws, and have very happily applied them to account for many phenomena ; but they have never discovered the efficient cause of any one phenomenon : nor do those who have distinct notions of the principles of the science, make any such pretence." ¹

That means are not efficient in themselves is seen in the fact that they do not satisfy us as a cause. As already stated, the planting of the tree in the ground is clearly one of the means contributing to the growth of the tree ; but that we do not accept it as a true causal explanation of the result is seen in the fact that we immediately find ourselves asking why it should contribute to the growth of the tree. Even an indefinitely prolonged regress of means do not, as we have seen, amount to a cause : the whole series of means or secondary causes, are, in reality, nothing more than effects. The whole series of means do not amount to a cause. That only can be regarded as a cause,

¹ Reid, *Works*, p. 527 ; see also pp. 57-8 ; cause, a law of human thought, pp. 75, 76,—not a law of Nature, pp. 66, 74 : wherein it appears to me that Reid has expounded the Causal Judgment in a manner far superior to Kant.

which inaugurated the series of effects,—namely, the Power which planted the first apple-tree, or the primal predecessor of the first apple-tree. That primal predecessor and all descended from it can only be rightly considered as a series of effects. Not one of them, nor the whole series of them, yields us the notion of true cause. In the notion of originating power alone, can we find the required characteristics of Cause-*Proper*. The human mind makes an *a priori* demand for a cause which cannot in any wise be considered as an effect. This is the causal judgment.

Consecution of events does not account for the causal judgment.—Through failure to notice these facts arose the disastrous error of Hume and his followers, that the “regular consecution of phenomena” was the origin of the causal judgment. “Nothing is more curiously inquired after by the mind of man,” writes Hume, “than the causes of every phenomenon; nor are we content with knowing the immediate causes, but push on our inquiries until we arrive at the original and ultimate principle. We would not willingly stop before we are acquainted with that energy in the cause, by which it operates on its effect; that tie which connects them together; and that efficacious quality on which the tie depends. This is our aim in all our studies and reflections: and how must we be disappointed when we learn that this connection, tie, or energy lies merely in ourselves, and is nothing but that determination of the mind *which is acquired by custom*,” etc.¹ If he had reflected clearly on the subject, he would

¹ *A treatise of Human Nature*, vol. i. p. 546. Hume did not deny that we “attribute some kind of necessity to the antecedent which produces the consequent. What he denied was that we have any justification for doing so. Of the supposed ‘necessary connection,’ he wished an explanation. . . . But the curious thing is that he never seems to have imagined that the link of connection, if obtained at all, must be obtained *a priori*.” Knight: *Hume*, p. 153. Herein lay the fatal error of Hume, as of so many other philosophers. He was continually getting into collision with First Principles—trying to illuminate Daylight with his tallow-candle. The man who refuses to accept Daylight (either Solar or Intellectual) as his

have found that the causal judgment did not rest on custom at all, but on mental necessity. "Contiguity and succession of events," however regular and extended, cannot, as we have seen, furnish us with the notion of causal efficiency—of primary adequacy to produce effects. As before maintained, an infinite regress of apple-trees does not yield us the efficient cause of apples; an infinite regress of eggs does not yield us the efficient cause of hens. The only efficient cause was that which produced the first egg or hen; the first apple or apple-tree.

Contrast between the causal judgment and contingent observation.—Contrast the note of necessity distinguishable in the causal judgment, with the mere mark of contingency which accompanies consecution of events. We see no *a priori* necessity whatever, why an egg should produce a chicken; but, having once produced the chicken, we are under the mental necessity of concluding that it had an efficient cause. So with every contingent fact conceivable. We are under no *a priori* necessity of thinking that it should have existed at all; but finding it in existence, we immediately discover, if we reflect clearly on the matter, that we are under the necessity of thinking that it had a cause—*i.e.* a first or efficient cause. Kant expresses this truth as follows:—"In experience, our perceptions come together contingently, so that no character of necessity in their connection appears, or can appear, from the perceptions themselves, because apprehension is only a placing together of the manifold of empirical intuition; and no representation of a necessity in the connected existence of the phenomena which apprehension brings together, is to be discovered therein."¹ It is also to be noted that

scientific guide, is not likely to discover a more satisfactory illuminant; and just as the philosopher, even, resolutely tries to avoid collision with the corporeally obvious, so he should resolutely strive to avoid collision with the intellectually obvious.

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 133.

any mistake we may make in the assigning of secondary causes, never impairs our conviction of the necessity of Cause-Propor.

As already indicated, I apply the same criterion to all the "Laws of Nature." Not one of them gives us, in itself, the notion of efficient cause, or of *a priori* necessity. In cognising the laws of Nature, we do nothing more than cognise an established course in Nature. It is a law of Nature that the blood circulates in our living bodies; but we are under no prior necessity of thinking that it should circulate; nor, the law having been discovered, can we detect any prior, vital efficiency in the circulating process. Both the law and its efficiency bear the note of mere contingency; but the law being an established fact, we are under a necessity of thinking of it as ordained, caused.

So with the laws of growth in plants and animals; so with all their organic or physiological functions; so with all the laws of nutrition and decay; so with all chemical laws; so with gravitation and the laws of physics; not one of them carries with it the note of necessary efficiency. It is of very high scientific importance to have realised this truth—calculated to save us from endless *labor ineptiae*. Beyond learning these laws, we cannot enter into the adyta of causation. Everything we know concerning them is derived from *a posteriori* investigations. To us, their whole validity is founded upon such investigations. It is wholly different with the causal judgment touching these laws. The moment that a natural law is announced, we find ourselves under the intellectual necessity of thinking that it was ordained and originated by an efficient cause. Upon this point, Reid expresses himself thus lucidly:—All finite things "depend for their existence, and all that belongs to it, upon the will and power of the first cause; therefore neither their existence, nor their nature, nor anything that befalls them is necessary but contingent." ¹

¹ *Works*, p. 430.

Though we had the most ample *a posteriori* proof that finite things had a cause, "that would not prove that they must have a cause." That is to say that no *a posteriori* proof whatever, gives us with it the note of necessity. *A posteriori* proofs show us "what in the established course of Nature, but can never show what connection of things is, in their nature, necessary."¹ This is also the Aristotelian view:—"Though every possible corruption and generation is from something, as one or more, yet *why* does this happen, and what is *the cause* of this,—for undoubtedly, the subject, at least, itself, is in nowise instrumental in making itself undergo a change? Now, I say, for example, that neither the wood nor the brass is the cause of either of these bodies undergoing a change; neither does the wood, indeed, produce a bed, nor the brass a statue; but there is something else that is the cause of change."² "It makes no difference whether one or many media be assumed, nor whether they are things infinite or finite; but in this way, all the portions of things infinite and of the Infinite in general, are similarly media up to the extremity; so that if there is nothing that is first, there is in short, no cause."³ What an enormous relief it would have been to our bookshelves, if Hume had been happy enough to have discovered, or even to have learned, these truths!

Thus it would appear that the right notion of cause is

¹ *Works*, p. 455. In view of such passages it is amazing to find Professor Caird stating that Hume's opponents "set about *proving* the validity of the conception of Cause from the point of view of Common Sense." *The Philosophy of Kant*, p. 215. I am afraid that he fails to understand either Reid or Common Sense. Reid recognised the causal judgment as a *first principle of intelligence or Common Sense*. He was too clear a thinker to suppose that he could "prove" any first principle. See his letters to Kames and Gregory in Hamilton's edition of his *Works*, pp. 57, 58, etc.; and see Hamilton's recognition of the fact, with corresponding eulogium, p. 753. Both Kant and Caird seem to be fundamentally ignorant of the philosophy of Reid and Common Sense. They are continually drifting into ruinous collision with first principles.

² *Metaphysics*, Bk. i. c. iii. 9.

³ *Ib.*, Bk. i. *The Less*, c. ii. 1.

that of a Power which produces the first effects with all their implications and consecutions. On this understanding, Cause necessarily signifies First Cause. In the absolute sense there is no cause but the First Cause—the *Causa Causans*,—that which in itself, and wholly by itself, possesses the power of producing effects. As we have seen, none of the medial processes or “secondary causes” possess this note of efficiency, whilst it is ineradicably fixed in our notion of First Cause. Therefore that everything contingent has a cause, ranks as an *a priori* or necessary truth.

(2) *Cause is necessarily intelligent*.—Further, the notion of cause-proper includes not only an efficiency to produce effects, but also involves an *a priori* or necessary assumption that it is in any event, *not less* than intelligent. In other words, intelligence is necessarily involved in the notion of efficient cause. “Who hath ascended up into Heaven?” asks the Hebrew philosopher. “Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His son’s name, if thou canst tell?” Certainly *nothing less* than Intellect will accomplish these wonders. Hence the unqualified futility of all materialistic hypotheses and theories touching the genesis of things. No materialistic account of the genesis of anything is, or can be, an answer to the question “why?”—which universally employed word always assumes and involves Intellect, at least, as the necessary Basis of Nature.¹ Intellect, or something superior, or at least not inferior, to Intellect, is the only rationally assignable cause of Nature. There is no rational departure from this conclusion: we cannot rationally depart from it, however anxious we may be to do so. Materialism itself

¹ Dr. John Caird clearly notes this fact:—The materialist while contemning all that is supersensible, is an “unconscious spiritualist.” “All materialistic explanations involve the vicious circle.” *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 91, 94.

is an unconscious attempt to satisfy intelligence; but intelligence will not rest satisfied with the materialistic answer. Mind claims superiority over matter. Intelligence quietly laughs at the materialistic answer, and scorns the audacity of materialism. Nothing less than Intellect at the root of the Universe will satisfy intelligence. This, I think, is Nature's great intimation to us of Deity and First Cause—grandly expressed by some great son of Abraham:—"The Lord by *wisdom* hath founded the earth; by *understanding* hath He established the Heavens; by His *knowledge* the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew." Cause is necessarily not less than intelligent, or it is no cause—cannot yield us the notion of Cause.

This view of causation,—namely, that it must be intelligent, has long been scientifically, as well as religiously, held. About the beginning of the twelfth century, according to Sir William Hamilton, Algazel, a Mahomedan philosopher, maintained "that God was the only efficient cause in Nature, and that second causes were not properly causes, but only occasions, of the effect. That we have no perception of any real agency of one body on another, is a truth," Sir William thinks, "which has not been more clearly stated, or illustrated by any subsequent philosopher than by him who first proclaimed it. The doctrine of Algazel was adopted by that great sect among the Mussulman doctors who were styled *those speaking in the law*, that is the law of Mahommed. From the Eastern schools the opinion passed to those of the West; and we find it a problem which divided the scholastic philosophers whether God was the only efficient, or whether causation could be attributed to created existences." ¹

Plato's saying—"The beginning of motion is that which moves itself," seems to express the natural conviction of mankind upon causality; a conviction which they probably held prior to any strictly scientific considera-

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 389-90.

tion of the subject. I should take this natural conviction to be the natural root of Theism in all its forms—from the lowest animistic notions of the poorest savages up to the divinest conceptions of the Hebrew seers. Nor does it matter what the actual genesis of the causal judgment may have been—whether *a priori* and immediate, or suggested by *a posteriori* and mediate observations. It may, as Reid thought, be “derived from the power I feel in myself to produce certain effects”;¹ but whether this be so or not, the characteristic of the causal judgment, like all others of a necessary nature, is that, once apprehended and considered, it is seen to be of a purely mental nature,² and to carry on its face the stamp of necessity. Though we properly speak of *a priori* and necessary truth, the crude thought of it, as well as the crude observation of contingent truth, has to be refined and rendered definite by reflection—for, as already remarked, necessary truths might properly be called truths of reflection. Thought clarifies itself by patient pondering. Thus, I repeat, the note of necessity need not be instantaneously marked on any truth in order to establish its claim to necessary rank. It is sufficient for all purposes when the truth is seen on reflection to be *a priori* or necessary.³

Ineptitude of the attempt to rise above first principles.—As to the First Cause, it is illogical and absurd,—a contradiction in terms, even to ask how it arose. One might as well ask how space, or time, or logical, or mathematical, or ethical truth arose.⁴ All first principles of necessary truth are beyond proof; that is, they do not admit of

¹ *Works*, p. 77.

² Cf. *Reid*, pp. 77, 78, 81. “From the existence of things contingent and mutable, we can infer the existence of an immutable and eternal cause of them.” *Ib.* p. 442.

³ Cf. *supra*, p. 216.

⁴ “The Moral Sense, thank God, is a thing you will never account for” (Carlyle, *Essays*, vol. v. p. 28). He should have seen this truth with regard to First Principles generally.

further proof—they are their own proof; they are ineradicably rooted in our consciousness, and we can never make them other than they are. They are, in short, Dogmas of Nature which cannot be rejected without stultifying and reducing ourselves into a state of intellectual impotence and absurdity. It should be observable even by the most obtuse intellects, that if an *a priori* truth could admit of further proof, it would not be *a priori*. Thus, Aristotle:—Some demand a demonstration of first principles “from ignorance; for it is ignorance and the not knowing what things one ought to seek a demonstration of, and of what things he ought not. For indeed, upon the whole, it is impossible that there should be a demonstration of all things; for one would go on in this case to infinity; so that there would not be any demonstration at all in this way.”¹ Even the dubitatorial Mr. John Stuart Mill sometimes admits this truth. “To be incapable of proof by reasoning is common to all first principles; to the first premises of our knowledge, as well as to those of our conduct.”² What glorious gaps it would make in our philosophical libraries if all the philosophers would just be good enough to note this simple truth and conform to its beneficent monitions.

Comprehension of “the Absolute” impossible.—Hence the fatuity of all attempts at a “Philosophy of the Absolute.” We must have pigeons before we can have pigeon-pie; and pigeons’ eggs before we can have pigeons; and so backwards in an indefinitely prolonged regress to a First Cause—not comprehensible. No man alive can carry back the regress to a comprehensible Beginning. All the heads of

¹ *Metaphysics*, Bk. iii. c. iv.

² *Utilitarianism*, p. 52. So, Hume: “It is certain we cannot go beyond experience.”—“We can give no reason for our most general and most refined opinions beside our experience of their reality.”—No science “can go beyond experience or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority.” *Treatise of Human Nature*, Intro. pp. 308–9. If the good man had but remembered these unquestionable principles, it would have saved him from much folly.

all the universities; all the illuminati of all the scientific societies are—without any reproach to them, as ignorant touching the desiderated comprehension of the Absolute, as any child of the slums. This is not a mere matter of opinion, but an indubitable and necessary matter of fact: consequently any pretence of a comprehension of the Absolute, must be but a charlatan fatuity; and rebuke, scorn, contumely, derision, are the just reward of all who pretend to possess a comprehension of this kind. If such persons would only consent for a little to stand in awe and sin not, to commune with their own hearts upon their bed, and be still, they would not any longer lay claim to an Absolute comprehension of things.¹

But a general conviction exists that there is an all-ruling Mind behind the Mystery of Nature.—It is no part of my plan to name “authorities” as arguments. The chief authority to whom I appeal in philosophical discussion is the individual whom I address; yet a few quotations may here be given illustrative of the opinions of representative men as to what is behind the Mystery of Nature.

The Scripture View.—“In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth,” and “made man in His own image.” Much more rational this, on the whole, than the doctrine of organic evolution. I apprehend that even the evolutionists would have laughed at it, if the chaetopod theory had been set forth in the first chapter of Genesis.

“Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out. He is excellent in power and judgment, and in plenty of justice” (Job xxxvii. 23). This whole book is filled with expressions setting forth the infinite Power and Majesty of the God whom the writer supposes to exist behind Nature.

¹ “If the Knower and the known be necessarily thought as different, the thought of what is absolutely one, or a being absolutely one and all-comprehensive, is impossible, inconceivable and unknowable. That is the sum and point” of Sir W. Hamilton’s argument against the absolutists; and of this his critic, Mill, “has not got a glimpse.” Veitch’s *Hamilton*, p. 251.

"The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chron. xxviii. 9). "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the Heaven and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above it" (*Ib.* xxix. 11-12).

"Great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him an house, seeing the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him" (2 Chron. ii. 5-6, etc.). Throughout such passages, and indeed throughout the whole of the Scriptures, the writers invariably assume the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent God.

Lao-Tsze.—Or take *Lao-Tsze.*—"How infinite and all-pervading God is! All Nature turns towards Him for support and sustenance, and He withholds nothing. It is impossible to find a name for His perfections. He bestows His love and care on all that He has created. . . . His glory is exhibited in the smallest of His works. All Nature reverts to Him; and though He seeks not to exalt Himself, He is revealed to us by His greatness."¹—Compare with Mr. Cotter Morison's "unintelligent designer."

Homer.—Or listen to Homer:—

"God gives and God denies
At His own will, for He is Lord of all."²

Aeschylus.—Aeschylus asks—

"Which of the Gods could I with right invoke
As doing juster deeds?"

He is our Father, Author of our life,
The King whose right hand worketh all his will,
Our line's great Author, in his counsels deep
Recording things of old,

Directing all his plans, the great work-master, Zeus.

¹ The *Táo-T'ih-King*, c. xxxiv.

² The *Odyssey*, Bk. xiv. 542-3 (Cowper's tr.). See his note, *ad loc.*

"For not as subject hastening at the beck
 Of strength above his own,
 Reigns he subordinate to mightier powers ;
 Nor does he pay his homage from below
 While one sits throned in majesty above ;
 Act is for him as speech
 To hasten what his teeming mind resolves."¹

Sophocles.—Sophocles was of the same opinion :—

"In this and all that touches men, I find
 Gods are the artificers. My thought is said,
 And if there be who cares not for my thought,
 Let him hold fast his faith and leave me mine."²

Plato.—So Plato :—"This same mechanic is not only able to make all sorts of utensils, but makes everything also which springs from the earth ; and He makes all sorts of animals, Himself as well as others ; and besides these things, He makes the earth, the Heaven and the Gods, and all things in Heaven, and in Hades under the earth."³
 "The primary God is eternal, ineffable, perfect in itself (that is, not wanting in anything), a divinity, holiness, truth, symmetry, good."⁴

Xenophon.—So Xenophon :—"The ever-living Gods, my son, know all things that have been, all things that are, and everything that shall happen from every other thing."⁵

Aristotle.—Aristotle also :—"To all speculators doth the Deity appear as a cause and a certain first principle."⁶
 Or take one or two moderns.

¹ The *Suppliants* (Plumptre's tr.), 586-94 ; also 670 et seq., and 1030. See also *Agamemnon*, 157-60. Sometimes, however, Aeschylus seems to waver between this notion of an Infinite God and a Fate to whom Zeus is subject : e.g. in *Prometheus Bound*, 190-200, 520-30, 929-60.

² *Ajax* (Campbell's tr.), 1036-9.

³ The *Republic*, Bk. x. c. i.

⁴ *Introduction of Alcibiades to the Doctrines of Plato*, c. x.

⁵ *Cyrop.* p. 43 (Bohn tr.).

⁶ *Metaphysics*, Bk. i. c. ii. 7.

Hobbes.—"It is impossible," says Hobbes, "to make any profound inquiry into natural causes without being inclined thereby to believe there is one God eternal, though they cannot have any idea of Him in their mind, answerable to His nature"; and even the ignorant,—“they that make no inquiry into the natural causes of things, yet, from the fear that proceeds from the ignorance itself, of what it is that hath the power to do them much good or harm, are inclined to suppose and feign unto themselves, several kinds of powers invisible; and to stand in awe of their own imaginations, and in time of distress to invoke them; as also in the time of an expected good success to give them thanks; making the creatures of their own fancy their gods.”¹ There is no savage tribe so debased, I suppose, as not to stand in some awe of invisible powers. “The universal instinct of the savage leads him to ascribe an indwelling life to everything that moves, from the sun in Heaven to the rustling leaves, and the stones that roll from the hillside across his path.”²

Hume.—So Hume:—"The only point of theology in which we shall find a consent of mankind almost universal, is, that there is invisible, intelligent power in the world.”³ Further, he himself admits that “the whole frame of Nature bespeaks an intelligent author”; and that “no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion.”⁴

Skelton.—Another writes:—"I can follow Him but one or two steps in His lowest and plainest works, till all becomes mystery and matter of amazement to me. How then shall I comprehend Himself? How shall I understand His nature or account for His actions? In these,

¹ *English Works*, vol. iii. pp. 92-3.

² Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, p. 225. He makes this admission in apparent ignorance of its theistic bearing.

³ *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 320.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 309.

He plans for a boundless scheme of things, whereas I can see but an inch before me. In that, He contains what is more infinitely inconceivable than all the wonders of His Creation put together, and I am plunged in astonishment and blindness when I try to stretch my wretched inch of line along the Immensity of His Nature. . . . How then should I think of conceiving of Himself?"¹

Dwight.—And another theologian admirably says:—"The soul of man, the body of man, a vegetable, an atom, are all subjects filled with mysteries; and about them all, a child may ask questions which no philosopher can answer. That God, therefore, should in His existence involve many mysteries inexplicable by us, is so far from violating or stumbling a rational faith, that it ought to be presumed."² Universal attention to these simple truths might save us from many an arid volume, and would be wonderfully good for the world's health.

Sir William Hamilton's objection to the Causal judgment answered.—Sir William Hamilton objects to the causal judgment as "a positive dictate of intelligence," on the ground that such a rendering of it would, in his opinion, lead to fatalism and atheism.³ "When we attempt," says he, "to realise in thought, *how* the fact of our liberty can be, we soon find that this altogether transcends our understanding, and that every effort to bring the fact of our liberty within the compass of our conceptions, only results in the substitution in its place of some more or less disguised form of necessity. For . . . we are only able to conceive a thing inasmuch as we conceive it under conditions; while the possibility of a free act, supposes it to be an act which is not conditional or determined."⁴ Herein, I think, he errs, confusing our volitional and moral freedom with the freedom of original, creative or primary causal power. Whilst compelled by our intellectual con-

¹ Quoted by Dwight: *Theology*, vol. i. p. 321.

² *Ib.* p. 321.

³ *Discussions*, p. 618.

⁴ *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 34.

stitution to say that "everything contingent has a cause," and prepared to admit, without question, that the cause whose existence we are intellectually compelled to assert, remains wholly beyond our comprehension, the proposition does not assert that everything contingent is ruled by the iron law of necessity. We merely assert that everything contingent is metaphysically caused, *leaving it absolutely undetermined as to what kind of law the contingent thing, or entity, is placed under—mechanical, chemical, vital, or volitional and moral.* When we say that "everything contingent has a cause," we undoubtedly include man and his volitional powers under "everything"—thus asserting that "man is necessarily caused"; but in so doing, we by no means say that man is necessarily placed under the iron law of necessity; we do not deprive him of his secondary causal powers, his volitional freedom. This would be as if we were to say that man is necessarily a mere machine: a conclusion not merely opposed to our consciousness of moral freedom, which is imperative, but one imposing a most unwarrantable limitation on the power of the First Cause. It would be the same as if we were to assert that the First Cause was necessarily a machine-maker only,—that the Universe was nothing more than a kind of vast engineering shop, in which the Deity was sole Engineer;—that the First Cause could only manufacture mechanic slaves like the one mentioned in Homer;—that He was unable to make anything in His own likeness, or produce free subjects: and consequently that subordinate volition, with the resulting possibilities of Virtue and Vice, was impossible and inconceivable.

Sir William's objection is, I think, untenable. Speculatively, as we have just seen, it is vain to contend that the First Cause cannot produce subordinate, yet free, intelligences; vain to contend that the subordinate is necessarily mechanical; whilst, practically, the fact of the case is that we are consciously free. In a word, we are subordinate

causal agents. Kant appears to have a view of this distinction when he says—"While reason possesses a causal power in relation to freedom, it has none in relation to *the whole sphere of nature*; and while moral principles of reason can produce free actions, they cannot produce natural laws."¹ Just so. Within certain limits, we have power to choose one thing or another,—one line of action or another. Within certain limits, we, as a matter of fact, not inconsistent with speculative truth, possess secondary causal power, involving complete moral freedom, of grand significance for good or evil. The human mind may be regarded as an *imperium in imperio*.

Thus, no speculative antinomy is discoverable in the doctrine that we are morally free though metaphysically caused. Before such an antinomy can be established, it must be shown to be incogitable that the First Cause should be able to give rise to a subordinate, yet morally free, intelligence,—shown to be incogitable that the First Cause can give rise to any subordinate "person" or "ego."

But besides this speculative refutation of the doctrine under discussion, we have, I repeat, the invincible practical criterion of our moral freedom in the facts of consciousness, whose unquestionable authority, Sir William Hamilton is never tired of admitting. Our lives proceed upon the basis of *the Given*. It is given to us in consciousness that we are volitionally and morally free. It is our divinest gift,—the gift beyond all others, perhaps, for which we ought to congratulate ourselves,—the gift by which we may indeed enjoy the divine privilege of Sonship to God. Being conscious of our moral freedom, we are in

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 489. There seems to be no difficulty touching the question of moral freedom at all, until we begin to lay down unwarrantable and *ultraviresian* doctrines concerning the attributes of the Deity and His methods of Government and administration,—a kind of speculation from which all the theologians should retire in a body. There are many subjects on which the theologian, as well as the philosopher, cannot be too quiet.

the highest sense, masters of our fate; and thus, as Mr. Oliphant Smeaton admirably says, "We ought not to be the dumb driven cattle of circumstances, but live in the glorious light of hopeful opportunities, making each circumstance a carrier to bear us onward to something higher. Not as machines or automata, but as reason-crowned mortals capable of influencing Destiny as much as Destiny influences us—such is the attitude of mind of any man who has risen to eminence by breaking the chains binding us to precedent."¹ In our moral freedom alone lies the possibility of our worth.

(3) *Supplementary Remarks on the Causal Judgment.*—It is submitted that the foregoing pages give a true account of the causal judgment as found in experience—*i.e.* by an examination and interpretation of our own consciousness respecting it.

Reid on Cause.—No subject, however, seems to have given rise to more various or hopeless theories.² Reid apprehended very deeply and clearly the real nature, the *a priori* and necessary character of the causal judgment.³

Kant.—Others have recognised this truth, but whilst recognising, have obscured it. Kant, for example, recognises its *a priori* character,⁴ but loses the recognition amid the verbiages and tortuosities of his system. He thinks that he finds it, if I read him aright, in what he calls "the principle of the permanence of substance," whose "origin or extinction is impossible."⁵ But what did he fairly and squarely mean by "substance"? If under that word he included the notion of a Primal Power, then he had apprehended the right notion of Cause; if not, not. But supposing that, at the places noted, he has apprehended the right notion of

¹ *Life of William Dunbar*, p. 37.

² v. Hamilton's *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 389–90, where various theories are discussed; also *Discussions*, pp. 606–28.

³ Fully admitted by Hamilton, *Dissertations to Reid: Works*, p. 753.

⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 146.

⁵ *Ib.* pp. 136, 141.

Cause, he seems to fall into obscurity and self-contradiction elsewhere—maintaining that the principle that everything contingent must have a cause,” is a principle without significance except in the sensuous world,—“that causality itself is a principle” without significance or distinguishing characteristic except in the phenomenal world,—that it is “a principle of the cognition of nature, but not of speculative cognition,”—that it is “valid only in the field of experience—useless and even meaningless beyond this region.”¹ Now, as with him and many others, “experience” is confined (wrongly, I think) to *cognitiones ex datis*, it follows that by this restriction of the principle of causality, he completely destroys its *a priori* nature—i.e. as knowledge derived from principles (*cognitio ex principiis*), thus contradicting himself and effacing it from the category of necessary truths.

Kant makes a further mistake, I think, in mixing up the causal judgment with considerations of Time. “The principle of cause and effect,” says he, “is the principle of the objective cognition of phenomena in regard to their relations in the successions of Time.”² It is a mistake, I submit, to drag Time into the discussion at all. Cause necessarily works under Time; but Time *per se*, is, in no sense, causal. An Eternity of mere Time is neither going to produce an egg, nor any approach to an egg. Time is not *the cause*, nor any part of *the cause* of apples on the apple-tree. Mere time would as soon produce turnips on an apple-tree as apples: that is to say, it would never produce them. *The cause*, though within Time, is not *of* Time. Time has no originating, or functional, or dynamical power whatever. Time is of no more account in causation *per se*, than space. Time and Cause are as heterogenous as

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 374, 390. See further touching this limitation of “experience,” *infra*, p. 313.

² *Ib.* p. 149. Mansel, apparently following Kant, makes the same mistake. *Metaphysics*, p. 374.

Time and Space, or Space and Cause. Every action and event, of course, requires and necessarily presupposes a where and a when (Space and Time), but they are, in themselves, wholly destitute of causal efficiency. Time and Space yield nothing more than their proper cognitions of duration and room.

He further errs, I think, in saying that Cause is inferred "from the impossibility of an infinite ascending series of causes in the world of sense."¹ This rendering of the matter derives it from a negative source, whereas the causal judgment is a positive requirement. In the true sense of the word, the "infinite ascending series of causes," of which he speaks, are not causes at all, but only secondary causes, or medial processes, no regress of which, however prolonged, can give us any right notion of Cause-*Proper*. In seeking for a cause, we do not seek for something merely antecedent. Antecedents and their consequences can only yield us laws of nature—knowledge of contingent natural processes—*cognitio ex datis*; whilst the search for Cause-*Proper* is at the very outset, a search for a positive Power to produce,—for a First Cause, whose existence, although altogether incomprehensible by us, we must necessarily affirm.

Hamilton.—Sir William Hamilton appears to make a similar mistake. "The Causal Judgment," he says, "does not even found upon a positive power; for while it shows that the phenomenon in question is only one of a class, it assigns as their common cause, only a negative impotence."² Surely not. Surely our conception of causality is that of

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 374–5.

² *Lectures*, vol. ii. pp. 395, 409. So Mansel: *Metaphysics*, p. 374. The latter supposes that in the causal judgment we "obey a moral, not an intellectual, obligation," etc., p. 375. I venture to say that morality has no more to do with the Causal Judgment than with the Ass's Bridge, or the Multiplication Table. The most immoral or irreligious person is as much under the sway of the causal judgment as the most authentic saint—Judas Iscariot, as Simon Peter.

a positive Power. A "negative" impotence cannot account for a positive judgment. The causal judgment is a dogma of positive intelligence. In this respect it stands on the same level as the scientific dogma—Space is boundless; on the same level, in fact, as any other necessary truth. Necessary truths are not negations,—not derived from negative impotency. They are positive, all-embracing assertions or affirmations. The causal judgment—"Everything contingent has a cause," is a positive assertion, not merely a "mental inability to know." Thus, although I truly say, "I don't know the efficient cause of this orange": although I go further and say, "With respect to its first origin, this orange is utterly inscrutable to me—utterly inconceivable as to how it first came into being," I yet find myself under the necessity of thinking that it had an efficient Cause.

Again, Sir William says:—"It is the inability we experience of annihilating in thought an existence in time past, in other words, our utter impotence of conceiving its absolute commencement, that constitutes and explains the whole phenomenon of causality."¹ I beg to differ entirely. It is the positive demand which we find ourselves making for an efficient commencement, that gives rise to the causal notion. The question of the conceivability or inconceivability of that commencement is quite another matter. Indeed, he himself implicitly recognises this truth in the same Lecture, wherein he speaks of "the quality of necessity by which we are conscious that the causal judgment is characterised";² and elsewhere he says—"A discovery of the determinate antecedents into which a determinate consequent is refunded, is merely contingent . . . but the judgment that every event should have its cause is necessary and imposed on us as a condition of our

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 407; *Supplementary Dissertations* to Reid: *Works*, pp. 936-7.

² *Ib.* p. 402.

human intelligence itself.”¹ Now, that which “is necessary and imposed on us as a condition of our human intelligence itself,” is clearly positive and not negative—an affirmation, and not a declaration of mental impotence. In this place he adds—“This necessity of so thinking (namely, that everything contingent must have a cause) is the only phenomenon *to be explained*”—wherein he seems to forget for the moment that no first principle admits of “explanation,”—that all first principles are primal dogmas of intelligence which, even by his own repeated confessions, we are incompetent to question, but which we are compelled by our mental constitution, not only to admit but to affirm.

His “law of the conditioned.”—In assigning the causal judgment to a “negative impotence” of mind, I think that Sir William is making a misapplication of his “law of the conditioned.” It should be noted that this law is not applicable to the determination of the truth or falsehood of any proposition, but is of use only as a dialectical weapon against those who would like to speculate beyond their actual powers. For example, we declare it to be a necessary truth that everything contingent must have a cause—*i.e.* a First Cause. Thereupon some very clever fellow starts up and argues—“A first cause is inconceivable; therefore there is no first cause.” To this disputant we immediately rejoin—“True, a first cause is inconceivable; but your conclusion does not follow, for *the absence of a first cause is equally inconceivable*”: so that as regards the *inconceivability* of the first cause, our disputant is quite as ill off with his denial as we are with our affirmation.

But this is not our position with regard to the *actuality* of a first cause. We have not to say—“A first cause either exists or does not exist”—thus leaving it undecided as to whether the first cause exists or not. The actual existence of the first cause is, as we have seen, a necessary truth. By the constitution of our minds we are compelled

¹ *Discussions*, p. 606.

to assert it, just as we are mentally compelled to assert that two and two are four; but as to the "How?" of the First Cause, that is a question which baffles us. Its existence and non-existence are, indeed, equally inconceivable; but in support of the truth of the first inconceivability, we have the necessary truth—"Everything contingent must have a cause"; so that the counter inconceivability must go to the wall. The First Cause is necessarily there, though not comprehended by us. Clear human thought demands its presence, and positively asserts that it is necessarily there, and that the contrary is impossible. Thus the assertion that there must be a First Cause, arises not from a mental impotence or imbecility, but from a strong mental potency; and, therefore, whilst "the law of the conditioned" is useful as a dialectical weapon against those who painfully dwell on the inconceivability of the First Cause, it is quite unnecessary to rely upon its aid in order to establish its existence.

So with regard to Space or Time. We have not to say—"Space must either be bounded or not bounded," and then go on to make choice of the one or other alternative—as Sir William seems to suggest.¹ It is indeed true, as he says, that space as absolutely bounded, is inconceivable, and that it is equally inconceivable as boundless; yet there can be no question as to the truth of the latter alternative, namely, that it *is* boundless. That is to say, we necessarily think that space is immeasurable: we are under an *a priori* necessity of thinking that it cannot be less than immeasurable.² So with time; so with morals, etc. In regard to no necessary truth have we to throw our propositions into the form of excluded middle. We have positively to assert that time infinitely endures. So with regard to the divisibility of space and time. We can fix no minimum either to the

¹ *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 369.

² The author of *Riddles of the Sphinx* wishes to limit space! v. p. 189.

one or to the other. We adjudge them to possess their particular characteristics straight off the reel. We cannot avoid doing so when we give our minds to such subjects. "This and that," we say, "is the truth of time and space: no doubt about it, incomprehensible though it be":—so that, as in the case of cause, a "law of the conditioned" is neither requisite nor applicable to explain or support our judgments of space and time.

It appears, then, that this "law of the conditioned" can only be useful for application as a stopper to the mouths of people who profess disbelief in the Infinite, because they cannot conceive it! "We cannot conceive boundless space: therefore," they weakly say, "we do not believe in space at all; we cannot conceive time as unlimited, therefore there is no time; we cannot conceive the possibility of a First Cause, therefore there is no First Cause." In such fashion do some folk argue. The scientific reply is—"Just so; but neither can you conceive the contradictory,—space as bounded or non-existent; time as beginning, or ending, or non-existing; or a Universe uncaused."

Necessary truths beyond criticism.—Besides, it should always be borne in mind that all attempts to explain necessary truths, or first principles, are illegitimate, unphilosophic and, indeed, absurd. Even Kant occasionally loses sight of this truth. That first principles are not grounded on higher and more general cognitions, does not, he thinks, "raise them altogether above the need of proof."¹ Surely it does, most emphatically, raise them above the need of proof. If they are not above the need of proof,

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 114. Aristotle and Reid knew better. Kant repeats the mistake, p. 242. Amongst modern writers, Mr. W. L. Courtney makes a similar error. "How," he asks, "can we deduce the existence of that which is the sole ground of existence? . . . How," he absurdly asks, "does a man know of himself that he is a personal consciousness?" *Constructive Ethics*, p. 50. Obviously such questions are idle. They illustrate the vain attempt of the finite to transcend itself.

it is quite evident that they cannot be *a priori*. Necessary truths, though they may be illustrated, cannot be explained by higher principles. They stand in no need of witnesses; they vouch for themselves. Their testimony can only be rejected at the terrible expense of intellectual contortion, enfeeblement and ineptitude.

Conclusion as to Cause.—To question the possibility of the existence of a First Cause, is to question the possibility of the existence of God. To wonder that the First Cause should be inconceivable, is to wonder that God should be inconceivable. Yet on this account—the inconceivability of God, many are actually disposed to say that there is no God. A strange conclusion this—"There is no God, because the existence of such a Being is inconceivable"! On the contrary, wise men will rather assume at the outset of their philosophical inquiries, that they shall not be able to understand His existence—that the limited shall not be able to comprehend the unlimited. In everyday life, deliberation ceases in front of the impossible.¹ The same wise rule should be our guide in all ontological discussions.

In short, as already maintained, there is no philosophic course open to us but to leave the Infinite alone in its stupendous and unapproachable majesty. Neither you nor I can possibly understand it, but it exists. The Hebrew Bard seems to strike the right note on this stupendous subject:—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."—"Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the Heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same and Thy years shall have no end."

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. iii. c. iii. 8.

The case, then, appears to stand thus. In the last resort—*i.e.* in its cause, everything is inconceivable; yet the all-important fact remains that, though inconceivable, it exists. We understand nothing but upon the basis of the Given, and below the Given, we cannot go. Everything known to us *is*, as a matter of fact; though *how* anything ever came to exist,—even the most inconsiderable thing, is absolutely inconceivable. But the inconceivability of how a thing ever came into existence,—*i.e.* the absolute inconceivability of a First Cause, does not collide with the necessary dogma of intelligence that everything contingent must have a cause. This dogma will assert itself in the face of mystery. It wholly refuses to submit to the law of excluded middle,—that is, to the dubiety formally resulting from the application of that law. Intelligence asserts that everything contingent must have a cause as uncompromisingly as it asserts that “lying is base,” or that “two and two make four.”

7. *Design*

In the next place, we are under an *a priori* necessity of thinking that behind all apparent Design (*i.e.* obvious adaptation of means to ends), there must necessarily be a Designer. This proposition may be regarded as a corollary to the causal judgment.

From the dawn of Literature, this thought has been entertained by the best minds, and volumes could easily be filled with proofs of the truth of this statement;¹ but

¹ Take Hume's admission:—“All things in the Universe are evidently of a piece. Everything is adjusted to everything. One design prevails throughout the whole. And this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author. *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 314. “That there is a God, is made evident by a very little serious reflection upon the outward world. We must end at last by resting all existence which demands an extrinsic foundation, upon a Being the fountain of whose life is within Himself.” Fichte, *Popular Works*, vol. i. p. 294.

above all other men's thoughts, consult your own thoughts on the subject. Any plain man is as fit to pronounce upon it as a genius. You cannot pick up an ancient mug without finding yourself forced to the conclusion that there was a designing intelligence behind it. You cannot pick up an old piece of bone with a reindeer scratched upon it, but you find yourself thinking of ancient intelligence and ancient art. You cannot in your excavations hit upon an old drain without finding yourself necessarily forced to the conclusion, if you think anything at all on the subject, that it was designed and carried though by intelligence, for a purpose.

And yet some of our fellow-creatures pretend to have scientifically concluded that the Sun and the Moon and the Stars exhibit no indication of an Intelligence behind them ! "We rained on them a shower of stones," quoth Mahomet, "and terrible was the shower which fell on those who had been warned in vain"—concerning the Deity.

Small minds frequently manifest an amazing objection to the thought of God. Because God is not subject to their little tape-measurements, they would have us conclude that there is no God at all ! They would not do so, I surmise, if they could be induced to observe and reflect upon the fact that Mind—even the Human Mind (whatever its composition and texture may be—a composition and texture utterly unknown to us) is the greatest known fact presented to us in Nature: a consideration which ought to make it easy for them to think that Mind, or something at all events, not less than Mind, must be the greatest fact in the Universe at large.

I venture to say that if we be sternly honest with ourselves, we cannot but think that there is Intelligence behind the visible Universe. Take even this little stellar parish in which we, at present, live—namely, the Solar System, and think of it ; and surely, if we give our brains fair play, we shall scarcely be able to avoid the conclusion that it

exhibits proofs of having been arranged with remarkable intelligence. I don't think that I should have any great desire to associate with a philosopher who could see no marks of intelligence about it; for, to speak with perfect candour, I think I should find it impossible to think of such a one respectfully. The man who sees no mark of intelligence in the Solar System, should fix upon the first of April as his *jour de l'an*. Perhaps there is more hope for an oyster than for such a man.

It may be safely taken, I think, that evidence of Design in anything, necessarily implies that there is a Designer behind it: that is to say, a cause adequate to produce all the effects manifested in that thing.

8. *Recapitulation of necessary Truths*

Here it may be advisable to give a recapitulation of these necessary truths, which we have considered.

(a) It is necessarily true that space exists; that it is illimitable; that it is indefinitely divisible; that its geometrical properties are unalterable. The contrary is incogitable.

(b) It is necessarily true that time exists. The contrary is incogitable.

(c) The laws of number are necessarily true. The contrary is incogitable.

(d) The laws of Logic (*i.e.* the formal laws of thought) are necessarily true. The contrary is incogitable.

(e) The laws of Ethics are necessarily true. The contrary is incogitable.

(f) That everything contingent must have a cause, is necessarily true. The contrary is incogitable.

(g) That the mark of purpose or Design in the contingent, necessarily implies intelligence in the Designer, —that the Cause must be adequate to the effects, is necessarily true. The contrary is incogitable.

Such is the voice of our natural intelligence touching these truths,—truths, most of them, of large significance. “If in spite of Nature we resolve to go deeper, and not to trust our faculties without a reason to show that they cannot be fallacious, I am afraid that seeking to become wise and to be as gods, we shall become foolish; and being unsatisfied with the lot of humanity, we shall throw off common sense”:—from which folly, may all the Gods deliver us.

9. *The Contingent and the Necessary stand upon equally sound Footing*

But whilst there are those remarkable differences between Truths necessary and Truths contingent, let it not be imagined for a moment that the psychological evidences of the contingent, if properly interpreted, are less reliable than the psychological evidences of the necessary. In respect of evidence, they stand upon equally sound footing,—namely, the invincible certitude of consciousness; within which and through which, we discriminate in any given truth, the note of necessity or the mark of contingency. Behold your hat and the space occupied by your hat. Your hat is a contingent fact; the space occupied by it is of necessity: yet the evidence for the existence of the former is as strong, as perfectly reliable, as the evidence for the existence of the space which it occupies. As a matter of fact, you have no more doubt about the actual existence of your hat than you have about the actual existence of the space. We are prepared to stake much more than our last pair of boots upon the truth of the psychological evidence in both cases. Indeed, it will be found, I think, that apart from its bearing upon, and its incorporation with, the contingent, the necessary is of no account. What is space without the worlds which it contains? What is time without the

events which happen in it? What are mathematical and arithmetical truths without mathematicians and arithmeticians, and things to measure and number? What is cause unless it be manifested in effects? Above all, what are moral laws, necessary and eternal though they be, without moral beings, *i.e.* free intelligences, to live under those laws? Thus, necessary truths considered alone, are as dead. They do but rise into living significance when regarded in view of the contingent,—the effected.

This is true. But the moment anything contingent appears, it exists subject to the mensuration and to the rule and governance of necessary truths. It exists under the conditions of space and time; it is under logical, arithmetical and mathematical computation; it exists as an effect; and if it be a moral being, it necessarily exists under and subject to the Law of Right and Wrong—*i.e.* to the Ethical principle.

CHAPTER VII

EXPLICATION OF EXPERIENCE

Common Sense as a rule of Conduct.—At an early stage of this work, I stated as an irrefragable fact, that the criterion of truth was only to be found in a strict record and interpretation of the deliverances of consciousness. This is indelibly true. Not even the foolish person at continual loggerheads with Common Sense in theory, can altogether break away from it in practice. He can no more break away from it *altogether*, in practice, than he can break away, in practice, from his own shadow; or reside outside his own skin; or lift the plank upon which his own heavy body may be standing. If the speculative foolish man broke away from Common Sense in practice, as much as he does in theory, it would almost instantly be the death of him—he would arrive at the Pit immediately. No man should adopt any theory, sacred or secular, that will not stand the healthy strain of practice.

The observance of this maxim will enable us to get rid of all the philosophies and theologies extant, except those which are firmly and beneficently fixed upon Common Sense. A Common-Sense theory will always be found to be one that can be profitably reduced to practice, or held with the most profitable results. (Of course, the intelligent reader will understand that I am not speaking of mere cash profits.) But up to this time, some have so completely failed to apprehend this great truth, that they actually talk of the “blank negations of Common Sense.”¹

¹ e.g. Mr. Courtney: *Constructive Ethics*, p. 209.

They might as well speak of the blank negations of the Moral Law, or of the Multiplication Table, or of toothache. The Common Sense is continually affirming and asserting truths with unanswerable and unquenchable might: therefore the far-reaching, all-permeating significance of the Common-Sense Psychology, so ably, though to some extent defectively, rough-sketched and introduced by that great and ignorantly-abused Philosopher, Thomas Reid.

A Common-Sense theory is one, let it be repeated, which, subjectively, demands the assent of the mind, and which, objectively, may be reduced, or serve as a guide, to profitable practice. "The proof of the pudding lies in the eating of it." Remember that great proverb. All philosophers and theologians should especially remember it. The pudding that is of no avail as healthy food, is no pudding: Take it away. Solomon never wrote a proverb more utterly irrefutable. No man alive can decently hold any doctrine which would render him ridiculous, or land him in a jail or a lunatic asylum if he temerarily attempted to put it in practice. The general realisation of that great truth would obviously destroy at one blow (consummation so devoutly to be wished) all the schemes of materialism, idealism, scepticism, determinism, occultism, obscurantism, and every other anti-Common-Sense theory, sacred or secular, that was ever devised; since none of these anti-Common-Sense theories can be reduced to practice, or permitted to serve as guides to practice, without entailing the most tragical and ridiculous consequences. There can be no consistency anywhere but in Reason,—*i.e.* in Common Sense. Reason demands consistency in all things. If you refuse to listen to the voice of Reason, it must be at the dismal and disastrous expense of becoming a sheer blockhead, or worse, to the full extent of your disobedience. As well fall over a precipice at once, or be

a creature made up of mere mouth and maw, as raise your heels against Reason. Even the poets would cease to spume forth nonsense if they would but listen to the sacred voice of Reason. The very Devil's only chance lies in listening to Reason—as indeed, the great Bard saw :—

“ But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !
 O wad ye tak' a thought an' men' !
 Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken,
 Still hae a stake :
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake ! ”

If he would but consent to do this—“ tak' a thought an' mend,”—cultivate Common Sense and walk soberly according to its sacred laws, it would quench the very flames of Hell.

There can be no progress in any branch of learning, sacred or secular, but in so far as you follow the most rational method of going to work—the supreme and ultimately, I hope, all-conquering method of Common Sense.

All consciousness is an experience.—Remember what consciousness is. All consciousness, as already indicated, is made up of experiences and deductions therefrom,—experiences of a self and a universe. Facts of consciousness are, practically, facts of experience.¹ Philosophy, as *knowledge*, is nothing more nor less than the articulate account and true interpretation of these experiences—these experiences given us by consciousness in all its faculties and capacities.

¹ Many writers have failed to apprehend this simple truth, *e.g.* Mansel says—“Thought is so far dependent on experience that where experience is impossible, thought is impossible likewise.” *Metaphysics*, p. 276. He should have seen that Experience presupposes a thinking being capable of summing up and calculating the elements, results and significances of his *experiences*. Thinking is the attempt to give an intellectual articulation to our experiences.

To express it in another way—Our whole lives are made up of experiences of bodily sense, and experiences of intellectual discernment. All knowledge, all philosophy must be rooted and grounded in these experiences. *A priori* truths (*cognitiones ex principiis*), as well as all observed facts (*cognitiones ex datis*), are given us in experience. Philosophy, as knowledge, is an articulate account and interpretation of these experiences. What do I find? What do I actually experience? These must be the first of all rational inquiries. What we find, what we experience, must be the basis of our philosophy, if it is to be worthy of the name of philosophy.

This was insisted upon at an early stage of the present work. At this later stage, let us re-test the principle. It may be sound policy to examine the foundations of our bridges occasionally.

(A) EXPERIENCES OF CONTINGENT TRUTH

First, as to contingent truth, what is our actual experience? For example, Here is a table. What is my actual experience of it? It is something quite different from, and outside of, myself. It is made of wood which we have agreed to call mahogany. It is four-legged and footed—though not properly a quadruped; it is flat-topped, smooth-surfaced and hard to the touch; and dark brown in colour. These are facts of the truth of which I am absolutely convinced; as absolutely convinced of the truth of them as that I am I; so absolutely convinced that we cannot even suggest or conceive the possibility of a more absolute conviction. It is a thing. I am a person looking at that thing. I shall be perfectly satisfied to be in New Jerusalem or in the Islands of the Blessed, with the same force of conviction. This is my experience of the article; an experience which I am unable, without making an idiot of myself, to call in question; and behind which I cannot

go, either in fact or thought. As Robert Burns with his usual perspicacity remarked—

“Facts are chieils that winna ding,
And daurna be disputed.”¹

That is to say, there is no disputing them but at an immense outlay of frenzied folly. Dispute the evidence of your senses in practice to a sufficient extent, and you are a dead man.

It is a vain thing to tell me that I am mistaken about this table ; that, in short, I am seeing something which is not a table at all ; that it is only an “idea” ; that its *esse* is nothing more than *percipi* or a mental modification of some subtle kind. It is equally vain to tell me that it is only a phantasm nicknamed a table, or merely a “representation” of something, and that there is nothing objective in it ; or that its objectivity is only a matter of inference ; or that it is only a “permanent possibility of sensations.” To tell me any one of these stories, all of which are told by the respective schools of philosophers, without any apparent twinkle of humour in their eyes, is to give the lie to my experience and to their own experience ; it is to say that experience is a liar down to the very heels of its boots. Any one of these stories gives the lie direct to my conscious experience and conviction that it is an objective table,—the lie direct, accompanied by a factitious and wholly unsuccessful attempt to deposit in my head a wholly factitious spectre or simulacrum of a table. All such theories are clean contrary to, and filled with rash contumacy against, our experiences ; in which we neither find ourselves thinking of the table as a mere idea or mental modification of any

¹ So Carlyle : “How entirely inexorable is the nature of facts, whether recognised or not, ascertained or not ; how vain all cunning of diplomacy, management and sophistry, to save any mortal who does not stand on the truth of things, from sinking in the long run.” *History of Frederick the Great*, vol. i. p. 14.

sort; nor as a tertian quiddity of any kind; nor as a "permanent possibility of sensations"; but as an actual, indubitable, objective table, pure and simple, against which all but lunatics and naughty children perhaps, resolutely refuse to knock their heads. We accept the facts of the table as given us in experience, or consciousness. Consciousness cannot transcend or rise above, or go below, itself. Reason cannot rise higher nor descend lower than the Given and its implications. The table is *there*,—Given in experience,—an indubitable fact which cannot sanely be called in question.

Kant and experience.—Glance at Kant's theory of external perception. I have not, amid the tortuosities of his work, been able to ascertain exactly whether he regarded his empirical "phenomena" or "representations" as something real, existing objectively, or something phantasmal, only existing subjectively.¹ But it is a small matter. Taking his "phenomena" or "representations" either as subjective or as objective, he does not accept the facts of perception *as we have them in experience*: and thus he stultifies his whole empirical system at the very outset.

As far as I can understand him, his position seems to be this.—He seems to propose in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, that the mind shall be accepted as a kind of subjective measuring apparatus quite reliable in itself, but that we are absolutely cut off from the possibility of measuring any kind of objective existence therewith,—that the subjective reality is separated from the objective possibility by an eternally impassable gulf,—or that man with his mind, stands in his relationship to the external world as a cloth-merchant, say, with his yard-stick, might stand to some problematical and inapproachable piece of cloth. Himself

¹ Kant declared that pure reason as purely subjective, and conscious of nothing but itself, is unable to evince the reality of aught beyond the phenomena of personal modifications." Hamilton: *Discussions*, pp. 5-6.

and his mental apparatus are real. The world is quite problematical. This seems to be the essence of the Kantian theory in twelve words. Thus the whole Universe and its contents, with the exception of the individual idealist, are logically subverted, and he himself is imprisoned within his own personality without hope of deliverance. Such consequences, indeed, appear to be the logical outcome of all idealistic hypotheses.

To put it in another way:—In the Kantian philosophy, number, for example, is the schema (*i.e.* the subjective notion) of quantity. Number is subjective,—*i.e.* *a priori* truth; but actual quantity only belongs to *a posteriori* or objective cognition: yet though we are in the constant habit of gauging the objective quantity by the subjective notion of it, we have, in the Kantian wisdom, no certainty whatever that the objective quantity really exists, or that it is anything more than an illusory phenomenon. In your head or mind you have the Multiplication Table and its implications. Of this you may be certain; whilst if you have an account at the Bank of England, both your account and the Bank are purely phenomenal,—perhaps phantasmal or tertian quiddities; but you have no proof whatever of their objective reality.

This, as far as I can make it out, seems to be the Kantian Idealism. Now, in order to find himself reduced to absurdity, business discredit and police supervision, let the Kantian philosopher deposit £100 in the Bank of England and proceed to draw upon it for £1000,—or to represent to his creditors that his £100 is £1000. Let him do this and he will speedily find that there is an intense reality about the banking “phenomena,”—so intense and real, withal, that he cannot even imagine anything to be more intense and real. But as long as the Bank is good for £100 and he draws within his £100, he will find his mental “schema” and the banking “phenomena” in fine, respectable and perfect harmony

with each other. What completer consonance between thought and thing would he like to have?

Yet Kant has the amazing fatuity to tell us that when men dispute about the external cosmos, "they are disputing about nothing, and that a transcendental illusion has been mocking them with visions of reality where there is none."¹ That is to say, there is neither a Bank of England nor a banking account in the whole world! Had the poor man tried to reduce his doctrine to practice, he would assuredly have been caught and, very properly, thrown into a lunatic institution.² The serious attention of all students of philosophy and theology should be given to this breezy and salubrious thought.

What do we actually experience of outside things—tables and chairs, knives and forks, sausages and potatoes, banks and banking-accounts? All the Illusionists should religiously apply themselves to such queries. Not phantasma of them! Not films of them! Not mere ideas or mental modifications of them! Kant himself never believed that the sausages which he ate were a mere mental modification of himself! Nor poor Fichte; nor any of his disastrous breed. All such talk is but the baneful jargon which has been addling the academic brain for centuries. Our actual experience gives an emphatic protest against all such phantasies, and renders them not only ridiculous, but as hypotheses of what is implied in external perception, absolutely unnecessary and preposterous. All illusionist philosophers are guilty of the gauche and inexcusable impertinence of asking us to accept their own crazy and spectral fancies as the basis of our philo-

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 313.

² But who was more cautious in hard money-matters than Kant himself? Think of his refusal to relieve the youthful Fichte's modest necessities. Alas, our great trouble with idealists, as with other persons, is that they are more given to the material than to the spiritual—more devoted to this world's jams and jellies than to ethereal pursuits: which consideration itself should bring them to an immediate pause in their idealistic polemic.

sophy in place of the indubitable facts which Nature has established in front of us. These things themselves—tables, chairs, etc., are given to us in living experience, outside of ourselves—*here* and *there*. This living experience it is illegitimate and incompetent for us to doubt. To call in question this living experience is to propose to shut out, to cut off, the very source of our information regarding the external world. That experience, indeed, *is* our information—the highest conceivable information. We cannot get under it; we cannot get above it. To refuse it in theory is intellectual suicide; to refuse it in practice would be bodily death.

Nor need the illusionists try to impress upon us that light and colour are *all* in the eye—nothing beyond subjective states.¹ They might as well tell us that wine consists in the mere sensation of drinking; that the liquor swallowed consists in the sensation of swallowing—as that light and colour only exist in the sensation of light and colour. I think we may tell them with all confidence that an objective luminous body,—a luminous something outside, is as requisite for the subjective oblectation of the eye, as the objective wine or other liquor, is for the subjective oblectation of the gullet. I think we may confidently tell them that this is no less the experience of the illusionist than of the realist.

Sugar is not sweetness but a sweet thing—a thing with an actual objective quality which gives rise to the subjective sensation of sweetness. The person tasting (*i.e.* the subject) and the thing tasted (*i.e.* the object) are the two factors requisite, according to our present constitution, to give rise to the sensation of sweetness. This

¹ "There is no greenness in the grass; there is no redness in the rose; there is no hardness in the diamond." Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, p. 6. Thus Mr. Clodd has achieved the singular feat of being, at least, two gentlemen at once—idealist and materialist. He may be regarded as having taken a "double-first" in the University of Absurdity.

seems to be the universal experience. Why boggle over it? Why try to make it out to be something else?

Thunder is not merely a disturbance in the ear, but also a tremendous commotion outside the ear. This also is experience—an experience which all but foolish or hallucinated persons are pleased to accept as truthful. Indeed, the experience must be accepted as authentic by all men who would avoid ridiculous deaths.

The illusionists substitute hypotheses for facts.—The illusionists are guilty of a double-barrelled blunder opposed to the primary dictates of intelligence. Firstly, they assume that the everyday facts of experience are false; secondly, in place of these facts they offer us their private and quite imaginary conjectures about the facts, which explain nothing. Both tricks are absurd and fatuous. In no conceivable case can any conjecture touching a fact, do the duty of, or be rationally substituted for, a natural fact.

Three philosophers—say Berkeley, Hume and Kant, are partaking of dessert. Berkeley does not, even himself, believe that he is only idealistically draining a piped or pipless delusion or mere “idea” of an orange,—that the *esse* of the orange is naught but *percipi*! Hume does not believe that he is not Hume and that he is not exsiccating an orange at all!¹ Kant does not believe for a moment that he is only representatively drying-up the representation or phantasm of something which may be an orange! What is the actual experience of these philosophers in the

¹ Hamilton thinks that Hume was not a dogmatist but a sceptic whose scepticism was logically developed from the dogmatic schemes of his predecessors:—“He accepted the principles asserted by the prevalent dogmatism; and only showed that such and such conclusions were, on these principles, inevitable.” Hamilton’s *Reid*, note, p. 444. But I am disposed to doubt the accuracy of this view, and to agree with Mill that Hume “sincerely accepted both the premises and the conclusions of his own system.” Perhaps the true account of the matter is that Hume had no settled convictions about anything.

assimilating process? Their actual experience is that they are actually absorbing the juice of actual oranges. In saying otherwise, these three good gentlemen are foolishly rejecting their indubitable individual experiences,—their native perceptions and sensations,—the clamant, irreversible, irreducible facts of their individual consciousness. The only delusions connected with the dessert, are the three psychological theories of the three sages.

The moment you see that the foundations of a house are utterly rotten, reason requires that you shall no longer reside in the superstructure, however pretty and inviting it may be. So with a philosophic or theological system—the inference should be patent to all clear-headed men.

If Berkeley had tried to reduce *his* theory of psychology into practice, he would most inevitably have met with a most ridiculous death. If Hume had tried to put *his* scheme into practice, he would most inevitably have met with a ridiculous death. If Kant had followed suit and tried to put his scheme into practice, he would most inevitably have met with a ridiculous death. Idealism, in all its phases, if reduced to practice, would consign all its votaries to ridiculous deaths. In University towns, victims of the idealistic hallucinations might be found lying dead at every corner. What hare-brained theories must those be, which, reduced to practice, would inevitably conduct their victims to ridiculous deaths! It is especially incumbent upon thinking men to refrain from making themselves ridiculous.

With wise men, experience must prevail.—If the philosophers proceed to say—"All very well, but we don't understand *how* the subjective ego can perceive the objective non-ego," I answer—"Of course, you don't understand it; you understand nothing beyond what is given to you in experience and its implications, neither of the world subjective, nor of the world objective." How do you exist? You know not. You know nothing more

about it than the fact of your existence. How can you think, or feel, or will? You know nothing of the "how" of the process at all: you only know that as a matter of fact, you do think, feel and will. In no case can you go deeper than the fact. So with the question—"How do you perceive external things?" You can go no deeper than the fact that you do perceive them. To try to go deeper is a warranty not of your wisdom, but of your want of scientific discernment; just as if you were to spend weary years in trying to lift the chair upon which you were sitting. What we experience in consciousness must be the basis of our philosophic pyramid just as it must be the basis of the Barber's art. Nature has so ordained it; and the Realist asks all his illusionist friends to realise as soon as possible that they cannot change the ordinances of Nature.

If you say,—“But the bodily senses vary in their reports of the objective,”—I answer, That may be; but the bodily senses are not the only source of experience,—they do not sit in the seat of judgment,—they only bring in more or less partial reports which *you* must collate and interpret. “The senses do not err, because they do not judge at all”—as Kant has said.¹

Experience of primary truths.—With respect to the primary or mathematical qualities or properties of the objective, all men are in positive agreement—Jew, Turk, Heathen, as well as all the sects of Christians. A short-sighted man, or even a man with half an eye in his head, can give you the dimensions of a carpet or a floor as well as if he had fifteen eyes. Why? Because he has intellectual intuition as well as optical vision of the geometrical properties of matter and space, and this intellectual intuition enables him to correct any obtuseness which may be found in his optical vision.

Experience of Secondary Truths.—As to the variations

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 209.

in the reports of the senses touching the secondary qualities of matter, this variation, of course, is not in the object but in the particular bodily sense or organ which acquaints you with it. If a certain odour is sickly to you and pleasant to me, it does not follow that there is any uncertainty as to the existence of the odorous particles ! It only follows that your olfactory organ and mine are somewhat differently constituted, and therefore differently affected by the same kind of odorous particles. The same in questions of colour, sound, and sapidity. But even with regard to such questions, it may be said that mankind have arrived at an easy working understanding with each other — Turk, Jew, Heathen, and all kinds of Christians.

If you say—"The organs being imperfect, I refuse to accept their information," I reply that you have come to a stupid conclusion. You are proposing to throw away your tools (of course, you have no intention of doing it) because they are not exactly of the same temper as mine. You are refusing to look at a scene through a window because the glass is not as transparent and flawless as it might be. But all that you would be justified in saying in such circumstances would be—"The dimness and the flaws in the glass through which I am looking, somewhat blur the object at which I am looking. If the medium were clearer, I should see better ; if it were less clear, I should see worse."

If you say—"The information conveyed by the senses being imperfect, the thing about which it ostensibly informs me, does not exist," you are guilty of a still greater act of stupidity. It is as if you were to say that because the window through which you look at an outside object is flawed or dimmed, there is no outside object at all !

Substitutionary hypotheses of external perception.—If refusing to accept the facts of external perception, you

begin to construct and to substitute hypotheses to account for external perception, you still further deceive yourself. Hypothesise, for example, Epicurean films or phantasma (whatever these may be) within the circumference of your cranium, and whilst outraging experience by your hypothesis, you are as far as ever from giving an explanation of perception. Hypothesise Berkeleian "ideas," and whilst experience gives us no hint whatever of the existence of such things, they too, when hypothesised, wholly fail to throw any light on the aetiology of perception. The seeing of a bee and the humming of a bee *within* the brain would be still more inexplicable and unsatisfactory than the seeing and the humming of that excellent insect outside the brain and within a clover field. Hypothesise Kantian representations, and whilst experience emphatically pronounces against them, so do they also fail, if admitted, to explain even the possibility of perception. Hypothesise even a bit of the best silvered plate-glass behind the eyeballs, or within the "sensorium," — whatever that may be, and still the problem of perception remains unanswered, inexplicable: though, wonderfully enough, a good, flat, plate-glass mirror mechanically reflects things exactly as the human mind sees them.

If the mind cannot perceive *the thing itself*, say, an orange, how shall it perceive the mere reflection, representation, idea, or film of the orange? If the orange itself cannot awake the perceptive faculty and be seen in itself, how shall a hypothetical reflection, representation, tertian quiddity, idea or film of it, enable us to accomplish the act of perception? Generally speaking, it is perhaps better to listen to the wranglings of washerwomen over their washing-tubs than to the speculations of the philosophers as to the "how" of perception. Generally, such speculations are but silly and dreary polemics against experience; profane rejections of the facts which Nature,

presumably with sacred veracity, has presented to us in Common Sense. In a word, it clearly appears that nobody knows anything whatever about the "how" of external perception; that we only know the external world as it is presented to us in the facts of experience; that we only know it *quoad* our consciousness or experience of it. Our consciousness or experience of it might conceivably be more comprehensive or less comprehensive than it actually is; but whether that consciousness be extended or contracted or remains as it is now, it testifies beyond rational dispute to the existence of an external world; our knowledge of which is exactly equivalent to what we have intelligently experienced of it, and intelligently deduced from that experience.¹

We assert such knowledge dogmatically. It is indeed a great evil to be "singularly dogmatic," like so many people, about things which you don't know; but it is eminently good to be singularly dogmatic, invincibly determined, about things which you do actually know—*e.g.* that soap and candles, wise men and fools, do actually exist. It is quite safe, I should say, to be absolutely dogmatic about such facts. It is dogmatic non-facts or nonsense, against which we must permanently object.

If the external world be not a veritable cosmos,—if our consciousness of it as a veritable cosmos be false, we stand perpetually deceived and befooled in the midst of it not only in the darkness of night but in the very light of day.

But it is only those who have speculatively cut themselves adrift from the facts of Nature, who can indulge in such fancies. When a man gets into this raging state

¹ "Metaphysical truth might denote the harmony of thought with the necessary facts of mind; psychological truth, the harmony of thought with the Contingent facts of mind; and physical truth, the harmony of thought with the phenomena of external experience." Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. iv. p. 68.

of mind, when his brains wax hot under the high fever of speculative delirium—he seems to be a bad case for the doctors.

All men sceptically disposed as to the existence of the Universe should go outside and sit down quietly under the clear roof of Heaven, and looking at the sun and the moon and the stars in a spirit of reverent wonder, seriously ask themselves if they have any doubt at all as to the objective existence of those bodies.

“*Substance*” and “*Quality*” in the light of experience.—A notion has extensively prevailed that substance may, in thought, be discriminated from quality. Thus Hamilton says—“In so far as matter is a name for something known, it means that which appears to us under the forms of extension, solidity, divisibility, figure, motion, roughness, etc.; in short, it is a common name for a certain series or aggregate, or complement, of appearances or phenomena manifested in co-existence.

“But as these phenomena appear only in conjunction, we are compelled by the constitution of our nature to think them conjoined in and by something; and as they are phenomena, we cannot think them the phenomena of nothing, but must regard them as the properties or qualities of something that is extended, solid, etc. But this something, absolutely and in itself,—*i.e.* considered apart from its phenomena—is to us as zero. It is only in its qualities, only in its effects, in its relative or phenomenal existence, that it is cognisable or conceivable; and it is only by a law of thought which compels us to think something absolute and unknown, as the basis and condition of the relative and known, that this something obtains a kind of incomprehensible reality to us. Now that which manifests its qualities,—in other words, that in which the appearing causes inhere, that to which they belong,—is called their *subject*, or *substance*, or *substratum*. To this subject of the phenomena of extension, solidity,

etc., the term *matter* or *material substance* is commonly given; and therefore as contra-distinguished from these qualities, it is the name of something unknown and inconceivable.”¹ Reid takes the same view.² Kant everywhere distinguishes between “noumena” and “phenomena.”³ Hobbes speaks of a *materia prima* apart from quality;⁴ and the distinction, I suppose, can be carried back to a high antiquity. Is such a distinction tenable in experience or thought? I am very dubious about it. Substance as *prima materia*, or *res per se subsistens*, or *id quod substat accidentibus*, or *noumenon*, seems to have no existence apart from quality; and quality seems to have no existence apart from substance.

For, consider it: substance in general is made up of a large variety of properties or qualities. One of these properties or qualities, mass, namely, or bulk with all implied in it, is common to all substances; whilst a large but indefinite number of other properties or qualities belong to substances only as they are specifically or individually considered. But the grit, the fibre, the texture, the colour, taste, or odour-producing quality of a thing, seems to be of the very substance of that thing, as well as the mass or bulk itself or any of its implications. It takes some of the former or more specific qualities in particular, in conjunction with the latter in general, to form the very substance of anything

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 137–8.

² *Works*, pp. 322, 392.

³ The noumenon is said to be “the object from the point of view of the Universe; the phenomenon is the same object from the point of view of human knowledge. The noumenon embraces, in this way, the qualities yet to be discovered as well as those already known; while the term phenomenon is necessarily limited to what we actually know.” Seth: *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 177. This, I must confess, appears to me to be rather unsatisfactory. What about mere *appearances*, which can be proved to be mere appearances? e.g. the apparent bending of a stick in clear water, or the apparent movement in a railway bank when you are dashing along in a train. But see *supra*, p. 65, and note (1) *infra*, p. 331, in which Prof. Seth clears up the obscurity.

⁴ *English Works*, vol. i. p. 118.

whatever. If the quality of a thing be changed, the substance is by that fact, correspondingly changed; if the substance be changed, the qualities are correspondingly changed; so that substance seems to be nothing more nor less than a complexus or congeries of qualities or properties. Remove the qualities of a thing one by one, and there is nothing left; restore the qualities, and the substance is restored. If you have all the qualities of a coat on your back, you are clothed in an actual coat; if you are clothed in an actual coat, you are clothed in all the qualities of a coat. It is impossible, either in the abstract or in the concrete, to abstract a coat from the qualities of a coat; or the qualities of a coat from an actual coat. In the concrete, no chemical precipitant can accomplish the separation of that inscrutable thing an egg from the qualities of an egg; and if the substance of an egg be bad, the quality is indubitably bad; and *vice versa*. Nor, in thought, is the *noumen* of an egg without qualities, or with qualities inhering, conceivable. If you could hypostatise a noumenal egg, in which the qualities or properties of an egg might inhere, it would be equally reasonable to hypostatise a remoter noumenal egg, in which the assumed properties (whatever they might be) of the proximate noumen would, in turn, inhere; and so on in an indefinite regress: therefore the noumenal hypothesis seems to be untenable. I doubt if we shall ever be able to make any valid discrimination between substance and quality, or noumena and phenomena. In pure fact, the sum of the qualities of an egg would appear to be the very noumen or substance of the egg, in so far as these qualities can be apprehended. This was the doctrine of Locke concerning "substance" and "accident";¹ likewise of Berkeley, who says—"To me a die seems to be nothing distinct from those things which are termed its modes or accidents";²

¹ v. *Of the Human Understanding*, Bk. ii. c. xiii. 19.

² *Works*, vol. i. p. 181.

and again—"If you take away all sensible qualities, there remains nothing sensible."¹ I cannot but agree with them.

But in the last resort, both Mind and Matter are, in their nature, utterly mysterious, and much futile labour would be saved in a prompt recognition of the mystery.

(B) EXPERIENCES OF NECESSARY TRUTH

So much for experience as applied to contingent truth. We shall find it equally satisfactory in its application to necessary truth. Kant rightly says—"It will be found that the impressions of sense give the first occasion for bringing into action the whole faculty of cognition and for the production of experience, which contains two very dissimilar elements, namely, a matter of cognition given by the senses, and a certain form for the arrangement of this matter, arising out of the inner fountain of pure intuition and thought,"—the intellectual powers in short; "and these on occasion given by sensuous impressions are called into exercise and produce conceptions."² Here he explicitly acknowledges that experience contains two very dissimilar elements, namely, the matter "given by the senses," and a "certain form for the arrangement of this matter"; but in the same paragraph, he proceeds unconsciously to limit experience to the matter given by

¹ *Works*, vol. i. p. 265. So Hume: We have "no idea of substance distinct from a collection of particular qualities." *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Pt. i. s. vi. p. 324. Mansel takes the same view, *Metaphysics*, pp. 328-30. He quotes Cousin's *Histoire de la Philosophie Morale* to the same effect, p. 329. Prof. Seth happily criticises the attempt to discriminate between phenomena and noumena. Noumena, he remarks, "are things a sensible man need never have anything to do with, and . . . the science which professes to deal with them is pretty nigh exploded." *Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 175-6. After this concession has been made, there is not much substance left in Kantism, seeing that "the *Critique* denies all knowledge of reality, whether of the world, of self, or of God." *Ib.* p. 178.

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 72.

the senses. This limiting of the meaning of experience to the information acquired through the bodily senses, I regard as an error,—an error, however, which is committed by a great many writers as well as Kant.

My own opinion is that we may be said to *experience* necessary, as well as contingent, truth. In one part of his writings, at all events, the same view is taken by Sir William Hamilton, who says — “An experimental analysis, but of different kinds, is competent to physical and mental science, besides the observation common to both. To mental, the trying what parts of a concrete thought or cognition can be thought away; what cannot.”¹ With regard to contingent truth, we experience a cognition of facts whose existence does not appear to be necessary, and whose non-existence is quite conceivable; whilst with regard to *a priori* truth we *experience* a cognition of certain principles whose verity appears to be necessary, and whose contradiction is incogitable. Experience, in short, enters into our cognition of both kinds of truth. All truth, both of principle and fact, is given to us in experience, and in the implications which it involves. Two of the fundamental notes of difference which we *find* in our cognitions as a whole, are those of necessity and contingency. Experience enters into our cognitions of the necessary—although they are commonly called *a priori* cognitions, as well as into our cognitions of the contingent.

Take our cognitions of space and time. In these cognitions we experience a conviction not only that space exists, but that it necessarily exists; that time not only exists, but that it necessarily exists. It is quite useless to speak of space and time in the manner of Kant, as “pure sensuous forms,” or to identify them with “pure ideality,” or to try to think of them as mere “forms of

¹ *Memoranda for Preface to Reid's Works*, p. xviii.

thought.”¹ As a simple matter of fact they are neither “pure ideality,” nor “pure sensuous forms,” nor “forms of thought” at all, but things thought about,—things so real, so intensely present in our *experience* or *finding*, that the absence of them is absolutely incogitable, and, speculatively, impossible. Nor does it impair the validity of our knowledge of the existence of space and time, that we cannot place ourselves in any part or period of them at pleasure, just as it does not impair the validity of our knowledge of the moon’s existence, that we cannot land there at pleasure. Our thoughts of space and time include the experience of a conviction that they exist and that they cannot be annihilated; and that however far we may travel in reality or in imagination, we shall still be travelling within the realms of space and time. This seems to be the only rational interpretation of our thoughts of space and time—the right rendering of our intellectual experience regarding them.

In spite of his theory that space is only a “sensuous form,” a “principle of sensibility,” even Kant himself, occasionally, “cannot help regarding it as an absolutely necessary and self-subsistent thing—as an object given *a priori* in itself.”² This is precisely my present contention. In short, he finds himself unable to rise against or above his experiences or mental convictions and the conclusions which they suggest, a fact which he should have regarded, and which we must regard, as ultimate and basal in human knowledge.

The same with regard to Number. All our cognitions of arithmetical principles we intellectually experience as necessary truths,—as useful for the counting and the weighing of suns as for the counting and weighing of green pease; as useful for the purposes of kings as for the purposes of peasants. So, of the laws of logic; so, of ethics; so, of cause and design. In a word, all necessary

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 184–5.

² *Ib.* p. 380.

truths, as well as all contingent, are given, or found, rooted and grounded in experience. All science and philosophy are necessarily founded in, and, to be true, must accord with, our inner and outer experience. In the great sense, experience seems to be to us the one source of illumination. By its sacred light we should religiously read everything that concerns us.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INDIVIDUAL IS THE CHIEF AND ULTIMATE WITNESS OF TRUTH

HAVING re-tested the principle that consciousness is and must be the basis of Philosophy and found it unshakable, we have now to re-affirm that the individual is the unit and exponent of consciousness: which is to say that the individual must be to himself the ultimate authority for all basal truth. To you, either as a philosopher or a layman, no other person than yourself can possibly be an ultimate authority. Another philosopher may indeed lead or direct you to scientific truth, or help you to unfold it; but in yourself you must find the chief witness of the truth—in your own eyes, your own understanding, your own heart. Within yourself, I say, this witness is to be found independently of all philosophers and philosophies. Until you do find it, you remain unenfranchised of philosophy and manhood. You can only be a freeman in the noble guild of true philosophers in so far as you know, or are trying to know, things through your own testimony and judgment. Until then, you are not fit to enter even the scullery of the guild. Until then, you can only be regarded as an old-clothes man in philosophy—a dealer in ancient and unwholesome wardrobes. From this point of view a very large number of our philosophers and clergymen are but old-clothes men—dealers in ancient but unwholesome philosophical and theological wardrobes.

Montaigne on the subject.—I think that the authority

and importance of the individual is becoming more and more recognised. Even a Montaigne, living in the ages of irrational dogma, could see that a man's self was his best witness for anything. "There's not so sure a testimony," said he, "as every man is to himself."¹—"It is at the expense of our liberty and the honour of our courage that we disown our thoughts and seek subterfuge in falsehoods to make us friends. We give ourselves the lie to excuse the lie we give to others. You are not to consider if your word or action may admit of another interpretation; it is your own true and sincere interpretation that you are thenceforward to maintain, whatever it cost you. Men speak to your virtue and conscience" (they should do so at all events) "which are not things to be disguised. Let us leave these pitiful ways and expedients to the chicanery of the Courts of Law."²

Descartes.—"All his life, Descartes asserted it to be a first principle that 'nothing could be called knowledge which a man did not know for himself.'"³

Hobbes.—"Natural sense and imagination," says Hobbes, "are not subject to absurdity. Nature itself cannot err." Rather, you proceed to err the moment you deviate from Nature. "As men abound in copiousness of language, so they become more wise or more mad than ordinary. For words are wise men's counters; they do but reckon with them; but they are the money of fools that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man."⁴ The more a man says on the strength of mere external "authority," the more nonsense will he be likely to speak.

¹ *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 407.

² *Ib.* vol. iii. p. 311.

³ Mahaffy's *Life of Descartes*, p. 143.

⁴ *English Works*, vol. iii. p. 25. It is also to be borne in mind that—as Sir Walter Scott says, "Words are the common pay which fools accept at the hands of knaves."

Locke.—Locke's opinion was equally decided:—"It is an idle and useless thing to make it our business to study what have been other men's sentiments where reason only is the judge. I can no more know by another man's understanding than I can see by another man's eyes."¹

Reid.—Reid wrote to Lord Kames—"I detest all systems that depreciate human nature. . . . Were it not that we sometimes see extremes meet, I should think it very strange to see Atheists and high-shod divines contending, as it were, who should most blacken and degrade human nature."²

Hutcheson.—So Hutcheson:—"We know the pride of schoolmen and many ecclesiastics; how it galls their insolent vanity that any man should assume to himself to be wiser than they in tenets of religion by differing from them."³ He holds that the right of private judgment is inalienable.⁴

Fielding.—"Well," says Squire Western, after hearing the reverend and learned gentlemen, Messrs. Thwackem and Square discussing the theological and legal aspects of one of Mr. Thomas Jones's juvenile delinquencies,—"Well," says the Squire, in a mingled spirit of joviality and disgust, "if it be *nullus bonus*, let us drink about, and talk a little of the state of the nation, or some such discoursè that we all understand; for I am sure I don't understand a word of (what you have been talking about). It may be learning and sense for aught I know, but you shall never persuade me into it. You have neither of you mentioned a word of that poor lad who deserves to be commended: to venture to break his neck to oblige my girl was a generous-spirited action. I have learning

¹ A. Campbell Fraser's *Life of Locke*, pp. 47, 89-90.

² *Works*, p. 52.

³ *A System of Moral Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 167.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 262. Notice how this principle paralyses all anti-rational dogma.

enough to see that. . . . I shall love the boy for it the longest day I have to live.”¹ The natural sense even of a drunken Squire Western is better than all the pedantry of our Thwackems and Squares. The wisdom of all the Church Councils that ever sat, cannot be permitted to take the place of our natural private intelligence.

Kant.—“Nature,” says Kant truly, “is not chargeable with any partial distribution of her gifts in those matters which concern all men without distinction. . . . In respect to the essential ends of human nature, we cannot advance further with the help of the highest philosophy than under the guidance which Nature has vouchsafed to the meanest understanding.” The majority of scholars “remain in a state of pupilage all their lives,” through lack of self-study and self-reliance. A man of this kind has formed his mind on that of another, “but the imitative faculty is not productive. His knowledge has not been drawn from Reason. He has learned this or that philosophy, and is merely a plaster cast of a living man.”²

So, Fichte in lucid moments—“Each individual in society ought to act from his own free choice, from his own mature and settled conviction.” It is of all things most ignoble when a man “gives himself up to others, and relies upon them rather than upon himself.”³

Hamilton.—“I would earnestly impress upon you,” said Sir W. Hamilton to his students, “Take nothing upon trust that can possibly admit of doubt, and which you are able to verify for yourselves.”⁴ It is golden counsel. Until you, personally, have intellectually masticated and digested a doctrine it cannot yield either strength or sustenance to your intellectual being: you do but stand in relation to it as the ass to its burden. To express it

¹ *Tom Jones*, Bk. iv. c. iv.

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 503, 506.

³ *Popular Works*, pp. 192, 263.

⁴ *Lectures*, vol. i., *Appendix*, p. 415.

in another way:—No conviction can be had of things, either human or divine, but from one's own soul. The highest service that can be rendered to us even by a sage, is to rouse and help us to obtain personal convictions. Until men begin to understand and act upon this great truth, they remain like Samson—

“Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves.”

Leigh Hunt.—“Let us neither be alarmed by the name of Philosophy because it has been degraded by little men,” wrote Leigh Hunt, “nor overawed because it has been rendered arduous by great. Let us regard it in its original and etymological sense, as a love of wisdom. The essence of Philosophy is the cultivation of common reason,”¹—i.e. the common reason of everybody,—which is the truth of the matter.

Madame Varnhagen von Ense admirably said or wrote —“Original, I grant, every man might be, and must be, if men did not almost always admit mere undigested hearsays into their head, and fling them out again undigested.” A hideous characteristic, this, of mankind at large, and the very special curse of all the schools. She continues—“Whoever honestly questions himself, and faithfully answers, is busied continually with all that presents itself in life; and is incessantly inventing, had the thing been invented never so long before. Honesty belongs as a first condition to good thinking”—let all the philosophers take note; “and there are almost as few absolute dunces as geniuses. *Genuine* dunces would always be original; but there are none of them genuine.” An appalling truth this—our very dunces not genuine! “*They have almost always understanding enough to be dishonest.*”² Get rid of dishonesty, and what blessings shall flow in upon society at large!

¹ *Preface to the Examiner*.

² Carlyle: *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. iv. p. 111.

Emerson.—Emerson writes on this subject with great insight: "The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled the book is perfect, as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

"Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the book-worm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

"Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him; although in almost all men obstructed, and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or

creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favourite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this. They pin one down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead; not in his hindhead. Man hopes; genius creates. . . . There are creative manners, there are creative actions and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

"On the other hand, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, in quest and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. . . ." Consider how the dunces swarm like flies and buzz upon all authors of *repute*.

The scholar "learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind, he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks. . . . The poet in utter solitude, remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that which men in crowded cities find true for them also. . . . The deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public and universally true."¹ "Religion is yet to be settled on its fast foundations in the breast of man; and politics and philosophy, and letters and art. As yet we have nothing

¹ *The American Scholar: Works*, vol. i. pp. 90-104 (Riverside ed.); so in *An Address*, pp. 125-7; and in *Literary Ethics*, p. 155.

but tendency and indication.”¹ I quote these passages at such length because of their deep knowledge of human nature. Their doctrine briefly expressed, is, that each individual should find in himself the Voice of the Universal Reason—that doctrine which is of the very essence of this book.

Whitman.—Whitman also makes some good remarks on this great subject:—“All is eligible to all.” “Produce great Persons, the rest follows.” “The only government is that which makes minute of individuals. The whole theory of the Universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You.”² “Whatever satisfies souls is true. . . . Itself only finally satisfies the soul. The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from every lesson but its own.”³

Professor Iverach.—And amongst recent writers, Professor Iverach aptly says—“The Renaissance is the first step towards the discovery of the individual; and when the individual is discovered, we have taken the first and necessary step towards a discovery of society—a discovery which is yet to come.”⁴

The Personal Proof.—So much for authorities. But those who rely upon authorities and schools—unless it be provisionally, for the validity of their philosophical and theological doctrines, show by that fact that they completely misapprehend the nature of the subject and their

¹ *The American Scholar: Works*, vol. i. p. 165.

² *Leaves of Grass: By Blue Ontario's Shore*, Sts. 3, 15.

³ *Ib.*, *Autumn Rivulets: Song of Prudence*.

⁴ *Descartes, Spinoza and the New Philosophy*, p. 14. “The object of a public teacher is no longer to inculcate a particular system of dogmas, but to prepare his pupils for exercising their own judgment.” Stewart: *Collected Works*, vol. i. p. 31. So, Hamilton’s old Master, Jardine, *Outlines of Philosophical Education*. The great problem of Education is to induce the individual to think for himself: this is really the burden of the book. “Progress in higher matters is always due to the minority, to individual thinkers, discoverers, reformers.” F. B. Jevons: *An Introd. to the History of Religion*, p. 396.

duty in respect of it. It is as if stating that sugar is sweet and vinegar sour, they were to refer us to Plato and Aristotle for proof of the doctrine.

Herein is the hope of Philosophy—that the chief witness of it as well as the basal principles of it, are within yourself,—ever at hand with their invulnerable testimony. Outside creeds and systems are a thousand-fold: most of them largely factitious and distracting; some of them, damnable. But human nature is one and simple; and you have a reliable unit or exponent thereof, under your own hat, however battered it may be, if you are prepared to give the necessary attention to the matter. This, of course, is the *sine qua non* of all intellectual, as well as physical, attainment. Study, then, the one and the simple within the field of your own consciousness with all your might, and give but a secondary regard to the factitious and maddening thousandfold lying outside and unfelt. Doubt not that in honestly and resolutely interpreting *yourself*, you are so far interpreting the very truth of God. With respect to difficult matters especially, the great mass of people who speak at all, speak, unhappily, without personal conviction; without personal care. Hence the vast network of error in which they are entangled, and by which they are despoiled of the chief treasures of life.

Generally speaking, the human head, unhappily, is in a state of more or less culpable muddlement with regard to all questions beyond the immediate range of its secular interests. It is the task of true philosophy to arouse the individual mind to a knowledge of its sacred potentialities, and to inspire the individual man to such life-ambitions and life-efforts as shall correspond with those sacred potentialities. The Salvation of the Human Race depends, under God, upon the efforts of Individuals. It is your duty to be one of them.

Therefore I appeal to you personally,—to your own experience and judgment, in all basal and ultimate questions:

not to your mere knowledge of any other men, or body of men's, opinions regarding them. You must know *things*, not mere opinions. Merely to know what other people think, or profess to think, may do for the examination room; apart from which, it is but the dreary task of the pedant, who is but an adult and mentally unexpanded schoolboy: whilst to have your own honest thoughts on any subject—to know and thoroughly realise what you yourself really experience and think, is the profitable, dignified and noble work of a man. Better, perhaps, in the long run, to go wrong through the error of honest judgment than right by sheer external compulsion.

All knowledge must be self-centred.—Your knowledge that Aristotle had two hands and two feet, is of no account as compared with the fact and the knowledge that you yourself have two hands and two feet. Your knowledge of what Aristotle thought about straight lines, is of no account as compared with your own knowledge of straight lines. Your knowledge of Aristotle's enlightened views of the Multiplication Table, is of no importance as compared with your own knowledge of that fundamentally important subject. Your knowledge that Aristotle thought stealing a bad practice, is of no account to you as compared with your own heart-conviction that stealing is utterly damnable. Your knowledge of what Aristotle thought about anything is of no account to you as compared with what you yourself actually think about it. You may rightly take Aristotle or any other man of real worth and real insight, for a guide and educator and friend; but you are a poor slave,—an unworthy subject of the Lord of the Universe, if you take any man, or corporation of men, for your intellectual lord and master. The knowledge of the man *who knows* must be self-centred.

Consciousness is the Sun by which all clocks must be set.—This warning is to be earnestly reiterated with respect to all theological and religious, or spiritual, questions.

The intellectual consciousness is the very sun of Human Nature. The ecclesiastics of all ages would fain set this sun by their own theological clocks (crazily put together, perhaps, in distracting times and amid distracting circumstances), instead of carefully trying to set their particular clocks by this sun—the intellectual consciousness, and nobly striving to keep them harmoniously revolving with it. If we would be wise, we must all set our clocks by that great Time-Measurer, and not try to set consciousness by the ancient and crazy theological Time-piece!—a horological expedient which must always be disastrous.

Scripture itself, which by ill-informed persons is supposed to be hostile to understanding, is ever and anon insisting that we shall understand things. "Understand," says the Psalmist, somewhat disgusted, apparently, with human stupidity, "Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? And He that planted the eye, shall He not see?"—And shall He not expect you to see and hear with those very eyes and ears which He planted? The remonstrance is addressed even to fools and brutish persons. Not even these are to be held innocent for neglecting their faculties and failing to understand high things. This is extremely important.

Absurdity of ecclesiastical claims to override private judgment.—It is deplorable to think that in our own generation we have so intelligent a man as the late Cardinal Manning flouting at private judgment,¹ and lodging a claim that "the Church" should judge for us in the nearest and dearest concerns of our souls: *e.g.* in the interpretation of Scripture, which it is anxious to reserve to itself. Surely—

"The welcome news is in the letter found :
The carrier's not commissioned to expound."

¹ Purcell : *Life of Manning*, vol. i. pp. 556-7.

Such a claim on the part of any man, or on the part of any body of men, unless made by the claimant in pure and invincible ignorance, is as the iniquity which "frameth mischief by a law." This Church-claim to deprive the individual of the right of private judgment and to stand, *ex officio*, between him and God, is probably the most damnable usurpation and tyranny ever practised by man against man. It has been the foul fountain of the foulest superstitions and crimes all the world over. Intellectually enfeebled and drunken and debased by their claim, the ecclesiastics of all ages have "gathered themselves together against the righteous and condemned the innocent blood." Alcohol in the brains is a trifling evil compared with the sacerdotal pretensions which may be hidden away in its convolutions. Surely, ecclesiastics have no monopoly of heavenly vision. There was no pretence of it even during the Israelitish Theocracy.

The ecclesiastic is not superior to the layman in knowledge and wisdom.—How is the ecclesiastic to justify his demand that we should surrender our brains into his keeping? To justify such a demand, he should be able to prove most clearly that he is superior in knowledge and wisdom to other people. Can he prove this? I think not. On the contrary, the priests of the world have all along, not only been very jealous of common sense, but frequently at vigorous war with it: which is the clearest possible proof of ignorance and folly rather than of knowledge and wisdom. They have not historically proved themselves to be strong men, fond of the light of the sun. Quite the contrary. Like the conies, they have, intellectually, shown themselves to be a feeble folk, having no refuge but in holes; and, like bats and owls, they have rejoiced more in darkness than in light. They have been and, unhappily, continue to be in many cases, the most obstinate of cryptists and obscurantists. Now, we must rather hold that the highest glory of man

lies in being a rational being,—i.e. an intelligent, free servant of God and man—whereas nothing will satisfy your thoroughgoing ecclesiastic but to dogmatise to the layman and strive to frighten him out of his Reason, as if it were really a presumptuous and wicked thing to be a rational being! Thus, in opposing himself to what is rational in Religion, the ecclesiastic gives no proof that he is superior in knowledge and wisdom to other people,—absolutely none. On the contrary, in warring upon Reason, he is engaged in sapping the very foundations of knowledge and wisdom, and exhibiting to the world, longer, broader and deeper proofs of ignorance and folly than of knowledge and wisdom: so that, in respect to these precious endowments, he has no right whatever to demand the surrender of our brains or private judgment.

The ecclesiastic is not superior in life to the layman.—Failing to establish in themselves the possession of any superior knowledge and wisdom as an inducement to us to surrender our private judgment into their keeping, have the ecclesiastics of the world furnished us with any such general evidence of higher living as to induce us to make that surrender? I think not. From the Beginning of the world even until now, History seems to furnish no evidence that its Priests and Levites, as a class, have been anywise more celebrated for goodness of life than for knowledge and wisdom. Many of them, rather, have been famous for speaking mischievous things, imagining deceits all the day long and perpetrating deeds of darkness. Inquisitions, tortures, murders, massacres have been some of the most renowned works of priestcraft. Church history, more, probably, than civil history, has, from time to time, been pervaded by odours of unsanctity viler than human nose could endure. Therefore, in this most important matter of conduct likewise, they have furnished us with no such evidences of superiority as would justify us in yielding to them the command of our brains.

The ecclesiastic is not superior to the layman in power.—But they claim to possess *ex officio* gifts from, and *ex officio* powers with, God¹—most stupendous gifts and powers if they were justified in claiming them; and on this ground also, they require that we shall surrender our brains into their keeping. To establish the possession of such stupendous gifts and powers, the clearest proofs must be demanded from them. Now, what evidence is there that they can establish such a possession? No evidence at all—either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. We will go farther. There is no sufficient proof whatever, that any ecclesiastic in his merely official capacity—*i.e.* as a professed sacerdotalist, has ever been able to do anything good for any human soul since the world began. From Aaron downwards, mere officials of any kind, have been the poorest of creatures. It is to be noticed and laid to heart that no evidence exists to prove that any priest, *quoad* his priestcraft, can do anything to protect you from the Devil, either now or hereafter. The *man* may help you by his wisdom and *manhood*—not the priest by his sacerdotalism. You might as well employ an earthenware dog to keep burglars out of your house, as a priest, *quoad* his priestcraft, to keep the Evil One out of your soul. In short, all sacerdotal claims and pretensions seem to be utterly groundless. It is not they that mum, or they who are mummers, that are to shine as the brightness of the firmament; it is not they who turn many to brain surrender and sacerdotal obedience that are to shine as the stars for ever and ever. The simple words of the promise are to them that are “wise,” and to them that “turn many to righteousness.”

The layman and the ecclesiastic are equally endowed.—Indeed, as between ecclesiastic and layman, the case seems to stand thus. As far as the evidence goes, the organ-blower appears to be endowed by God with all the most

¹ See, *e.g.*, *Life of the Curé D'Ars*, pp. 269–72 (Burns & Oates, 1891).

sacred gifts and potentialities of the bishop. We may all be in "holy orders," if we have the sense to see it. It is our duty to be in "holy orders" in the loftiest meaning of the phrase—the duty of every one of us. It is the *man* who is sacred or should be; and upon the sacredness of the man wholly depends the sacredness of the priest. As far as the evidence goes, it would appear that "holy orders" are only derivable from holy living. I think we may be quite certain that this was Christ's view of the matter, and that He held mere priesthood in absolute contempt. There is something very great to be done by the very smallest—priest or no priest. It must be of the highest importance to the smallest, to know this truth.

The most rational are the most religious.—I am entirely friendly to Religion. I hold it to be the chief end of man and the chief glory of man to be religious. I hold that the most religious of men must necessarily be the most rational of men; and, conversely, that the most rational of men must necessarily be the most religious of men. There cannot be any conflict between Reason and Religion. The conflict,—the eternal conflict, is between Reason and Blockheadism. No vice, no impiety, is consonant with the Rational. The Rational demands the highest virtue of us,—the highest piety. Every deviation from virtue and piety is an offence to Reason, and is, indeed, irrational. In these circumstances, what a reproach it is to the intelligence of the Church at large, to speak reproachfully, as it does, of Rationalism.

I call upon ecclesiastics to witness that it would be more reasonable for them to demand that we should renounce the use of our feet than the use of our intelligence,—more reasonable for them to demand that we should permanently keep our feet up in the air, than that we should stow away our brains in the sacerdotal dungeons.

I call upon them to observe that it would be a much

less ungodly thing to deprive a man of his purse than of his right of private judgment. I would rather see a priest speeding off with my purse or my dinner than with my brains. I feel sure that the more intelligent amongst our ecclesiastical brethren of any communion, would be so minded if the case were clearly put to them. It is strange that any one should fail to see the importance of this doctrine—the utter sacredness of unclouded intellect, in its fine simplicity and glorious significance. To take away the right of private judgment in one's most precious concerns, is far worse than kidnapping. Any man of worth would rather be turned into a rabbit straight away than suffer so ruinous a loss. Deprived of this endowment, Heaven itself would cease to be Heaven to any true man. Deprived of this right, a man ceases to be a man.

Observe closely: One true freeman is worth myriads of millions of spiritual slaves. Man is made in "the likeness of God," inasmuch as he has been created free—*i.e.* endowed with the divine privilege of personal responsibility. Only through and by this most glorious endowment can he attain to intrinsic dignity—not the mere dignity of stars and garters, but the resplendent dignity, it may be, of Sonship to God and Brotherhood with Christ. Destroy private judgment, and you destroy the very possibility of human dignity. Christ Himself ever taught the necessity of complete spiritual enfranchisement. Let the Churches look to their commission.

Let them look to it. Instead of trying to throttle private judgment and to destroy the brains of the laity, it is their strict duty to do all they can to cultivate brains—their own included, and private judgment. This is the special task allotted to all enlightened educators, sacred and secular. With Paul, it is their strict and primary duty to labour earnestly and pray for the laity and themselves, that "their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that they may approve

things that are excellent, that they may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness." That's the whole thing—the whole question of private judgment, in a nutshell. It is their strict duty to do such things—to teach, not to dogmatise; to guide rationally, not to drive irrationally. The world requires Teachers and Guides, not drivers and irrational dogmatists.

It is only through dire necessity, such as the pressure occasioned by the near approach of death, that a man of Common Sense will commit even his secular business to the care of another. How much more chary should we be in committing our immortal souls to the care of another! We might as well ask another man to breathe for us, as a priest to make spiritual arrangements for us. Depend upon it that Rhadamanthus will not recognise such arrangements. My soul is far too important a concern to commit to the charge of any mortal but myself. How otherwise than by manly and modest self-assertion am I to attain to spiritual dignity—the only dignity worthy of a man's ambition.

The most rational men are the best teachers.—The man who can communicate the A B C well, is a more important personage than he who pretends to an incommunicable knowledge of Divine things. The good A B C teacher carries more candle-power with him through the terrestrial darkness than all the mystical theologians, *quoad* their mysticisms, in a drove. An ordinary lamplighter is, probably, a far more precious and hopeful member of society than a mystical and obscurantist theologian. Somebody has noticed the insuperable objections entertained by all owls to the light of candles. I am disposed to think that there is nothing that the Devil dislikes so much as Light. Try to think of *him* getting frightened at such things as vestments, altar-candles, fish on Fridays, holy water! Insist on your parson being sensible. Insist that, whenever he

proposes to speak or minister before you in any way, he must address himself to your intelligence; and let him know that in so far as he is unable to communicate with you rationally, he must remain but a barbarian unto you. Treat him as a wag merely, if he asks you to credit anything opposed to intelligence, on the credit either of himself or of any society whom he may represent. Saint Dunstan "led the divell about the house by the nose with a pair of pinsors or tongs, and made him roar so loud as the place rang thereof"¹—but such stories, however entertaining, are not good history.

This cannot be too closely laid to heart. Pure understanding of the craft is a necessary factor in brick-laying, boot-making, engineering, bottle-washing—in every handicraft that can be mentioned. So in all arts, businesses and professions. The intelligence—the private judgment of the individual must lie at the root of excellence in the individual. The greater the intelligence or private judgment of the individual, the greater his excellence in his handicraft, art, business or profession. In every case, private judgment is an absolutely necessary factor for the production of excellence. A bottle-washer with no private judgment! . . . And yet our cardinals and other enterprising people wish to deprive us of private judgment in the matter of our immortal souls! No wonder that the world presents such a hideous history.

It will not do. The theologian must be able to commend his theology to the intelligence of the individual. Theology can only be of living worth to any human soul, in so far as it is intelligently apprehended by that human soul.

The most rational men are the most companionable and eligible in all respects.—And whilst there can be no human excellence but on a groundwork of understanding, it is also quite clear that we can only be fit and profitable com-

¹ Scot: *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Bk. v. 8.

panions to each other in so far as we essentially know and act, or are capable of knowing and acting, in a rational manner. The more a man knows, and the greater his capability of knowing and acting in accordance with his knowledge, he is the more fit and profitable and altogether eligible as a companion for others.

Conclusion of the matter.—Thus, not only our philosophic, but also our theologic and religious message, is to the individual. If you are to be a philosopher, or a theologian, or a saint, you must be it, so to speak, on your own knowing and doing, just as, if you were going to be a tailor, there would be nothing for it but that you should personally understand the tailor's handicraft; personally sit upon the tailor's board; personally, handle his needle; personally, his goose. As Whitman happily expresses it: "The little plentiful manikins skipping around in collars and tailed coats, I am aware who they are (they are positively not worms or fleas)—I acknowledge the duplicates of myself—the weakest and shallowest is deathless with me": at least, I should say, possesses with me, the potentiality of deathlessness. "What I do and say, the same waits for them; every thought that flounders in me, the same flounders in them."¹

In a word, the human mind—*i.e.* the individual mind, however mean, is the counting-house, in the last resort, for all its chief concerns, possessing within itself all the standards, principles and powers of comparison and computation.

The individual mind carries its own lantern; sees things, as it were, by its own light; measures things by its own principles; knows what things it can measure, and what are beyond measure. Until it actually does so, it is in the dark as to those things; those things are in the dark to it.

A sound Psychology thus gives us the criteria, the apparatus, by which all doctrine, whether *a priori* or

¹ *Leaves of Grass*, pp. 68-9.

a posteriori, is to be measured. If a doctrine should harmonise with these psychological criteria, it is established as a truth, *a priori* or *a posteriori*, according to its quality. If a doctrine be out of harmony with such criteria, it must be rejected as false ; whilst if for any reason we are unable to apply our criteria to any doctrine, the question of its truth or falsehood must, on that account, remain unanswered.

In the last resort, all truth, in so far as we can apprehend it, resolves itself into agreement with one's own mind ; whilst all falsehood resolves itself into disagreement with one's own mind. There is no heterodoxy but this—dishonesty—disloyalty to one's own convictions. Agreement with oneself is, perhaps, the finest harmony obtainable ; disagreement with oneself, the most terrible discord. He falls below the dignity of true manhood who does not strive to be true to his own convictions in the teeth of all the world. To be true to self is to be true to God ; to be false to self is to be false to God.

CHAPTER IX

RECAPITULATION OF PRINCIPLES

To recapitulate:—(1) The true philosopher must recognise the existence of a criterion of truth; (2) he must find that criterion in consciousness; (3) he must accept and interpret consciousness in its integrity; (4) he must recognise that, in their qualities and manifestations, mind and matter are mutually incommensurable; (5) he must recognise the distinction between the finite and the infinite, and submit to the lessons implied in that distinction; (6) he must observe the distinction between necessary and contingent truth; and (7) he must recognise the individual to be the chief and ultimate witness of all basal truth.

Those seven propositions embody some of the axioms and first principles of a rational psychology; and they seem to be *implicitly* recognised by all men—even those by whom they are *explicitly* denied. You cannot rationally open your mouth to discuss the foundations and sanctions of science without yielding an implicit, if not an explicit, recognition of those principles and axioms. The frank acceptance of such, followed by a loyal and steadfast adherence to them in speculation and practice, would go far, I believe, not only to protect seekers of truth from error, but also to abolish the most mischievous of the false theories which now pester the world.

CHAPTER X

DEFINITION AND END OF PHILOSOPHY

Definition of Philosophy.—So far, I have not attempted to give any definition of Philosophy, but have treated it in a general manner as synonymous with knowledge and the pursuit of it—interest in the Universal. Strictly speaking, What is Philosophy?

Pythagoras called it “the knowledge of things existing”; Bacon, “the interpretation of Nature.” If, says he, “any man think Philosophy and Universality to be idle studies, he doth not consider that all professions are from them, served and supplied”;¹ and in his *Apophthegms*, he quotes with approbation the saying of Aristippus that “those who studied particular sciences and neglected Philosophy, were like Penelope’s wooers that made love to the waiting women.”² Hobbes in one place calls it “the study of wisdom”;³ and again, “such knowledge of effects or appearances as we acquire by true ratiocination from the knowledge we have first of their causes and generation: and again of such causes or generations as may be from knowing first their effects.”⁴ Under the definition he excludes Theology and what he calls “the doctrine of God’s worship,” from the consideration of Philosophy, as being “not to be known by natural reason, but by the authority of the Church; and

¹ *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. ii. ; *Works*, vol. i. p. 70.

² *Works*, vol. ii. p. 452.

³ *English Works*, vol. i., *Ep. to the Reader*, p. xiv.

⁴ *Works*, vol. i. p. 3.

as being the object of Faith and not of Knowledge":¹ so far adrift can men be wafted when they cut the tether of Common Sense, and dishonour those faculties with which they have been so beneficently endowed.

Philosophy has also been defined as "the science of things divine and human and of the causes in which they are contained";—"the science of sufficient reasons";—"the science of things possible inasmuch as they are possible";—"the science of things evidently deduced from first principles," and so on.² Relative to knowledge, Sir William Hamilton takes it to mean the knowledge of effects in their causes. Such, he says, is "philosophical knowledge in its most extensive signification: and, in this signification, all the sciences occupied in the research of causes, may be viewed as so many branches of philosophy."³ Indeed, the words science and philosophy are frequently used as if they were quite interchangeable.

These words should not be synonymised. Science has a well-defined meaning. "Whenever a man is convinced of anything, and the principles are known to him, he knows it scientifically"—as expressed by Aristotle;⁴ or as Hamilton defines it,—“A science is a complement of cognitions having in point of form, the character of logical perfection; in point of matter, the character of real

¹ *Works*, vol. i. pp. 10-11. A mistake made as commonly to-day, perhaps, as in the time of Hobbes: e.g. "Christianity does not charge Reason itself but *unregenerate* Reason, with incapacity to discover the things of the spirit." Fisher: *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, p. 352. As if two kinds of Reason could exist! How desirable that such error should be destroyed!

² Quoted by Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 49-50.

³ *Ib.* pp. 60-61.

⁴ *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. vi. c. iii. 4. Jacobi defines Science as a "systematic register of cognitions mutually referring to one another—the first and last point in the series is wanting." *The Logic of Hegel* (Wallace), p. 406. Lewes tells us that the method of *theology* is subjective; that of *science*, objective. *History of Philosophy*, vol. i., Intro. p. xx. Clearly an erroneous distinction. Science, properly speaking, is inclusive of all reasoned knowledge.

truth.”¹ The word science seems to be amply sufficient to cover all knowledge of the “why” of anything, and might be used to connote all reasoned knowledge whatever: whilst the word philosophy might be profitably restricted to denote what it signifies etymologically, namely, the love and pursuit of knowledge and wisdom—knowledge and wisdom in the most comprehensive sense.

Thus, for instance, instead of speaking of “mental *philosophy*” and “natural *science*,” as many do, science might be taken as the genus embracing all reasoned knowledge, whether of matter or mind. It would then naturally present itself to us in two great leading divisions, namely, science of mind and science of matter; and these main divisions would, in turn, offer themselves for further scientific division and subdivision. The generic word science would thus embrace all reasoned knowledge—from knowledge of a speck of dust up to a knowledge of the Universe; from knowledge of insects up to knowledge of the Deity. Thus the whole of Science would be the answer to three questions: (1) “What are the facts or phenomena to be observed? (2) What are the laws which regulate these facts, or under which these phenomena appear? (3) What are the real results, not immediately manifested, which these facts or phenomena warrant us in drawing?”² The mind of man might be regarded as a kind of scientific mirror to all Nature.

The word science having been restricted to its proper etymological signification of knowledge, the word philosophy could then be employed in its etymological

¹ *Lectures*, vol. iv. p. 2.

² Hamilton assigns this task to Philosophy: *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 121. So Lewes:—Philosophy “has always had one aim, that of furnishing an explanation of the world, of man and of society. To solve the problems of existence and to supply a rule of life, have constituted its purpose more or less avowed.” *History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 689. This should rather be regarded as the programme of Science.

signification of love of knowledge and wisdom ; the moral philosopher, as the lover of knowledge and wisdom ; and the cognate adjectives, etc., in a corresponding sense.

The End of Philosophy.—But a more important question now presents itself: What is the End of Philosophy? What must be the chief purpose of the Philosopher? “One who is possessed of mind always does a thing for some purpose or other.”¹ What is my chief object in life? Everybody should ask himself this question with the profoundest concern.

Not the acquisition of material wealth.—Obviously, it cannot be the acquisition of any kind of external or material goods, mainly. If it were so, successful bankers, bakers, brewers, etc., would be the greatest of philosophers. The late Jay Gould would have been about the greatest that ever lived. Lombard Street and Wall Street would be the headquarters of Philosophy.

Nor popularity.—Obviously, it cannot be the acquisition of any kind of popularity or notoriety.—

“Fame the great ill, from small beginnings grows.”

If Philosophers had thus to be distinguished, our Glozers and Greatbothams and quack medicine-men in all walks of life, would be amongst the greatest of Philosophers.

Nor renown.—It cannot be the acquisition of mere renown. If it were so, our Caesars and Alexanders would be amongst the greatest of Philosophers, but it is much otherwise. With Dr. Johnson, “I cannot conceive why he that has burnt cities, wasted nations and filled the world with horror and desolation, should be more kindly regarded by mankind, than he that died in the rudiments of wickedness ; why he that accomplished mischief should be glorious, and he that only endeavoured it should be criminal. I would wish Caesar and Catiline, Xerxes and

¹ Aristotle : *Metaphysics*, Bk. i. c. ii. 5.

² v. *The Greenleeks Papers* (Dent).

Alexander, Charles and Peter, huddled together in obscurity and detestation.”¹

Nor professional success.—Again,—it cannot be professional success of any kind. If it were so, our Lord Chancellors and Chief-Justices, our Popes and Archbishops, would be the greatest of Philosophers.

Nor rank.—It cannot be hereditary, or high, rank of any kind. If such were the mark of the Philosopher, our crowned heads, grand dukes and duchesses, would be the greatest of Philosophers.

“My father is a baron bold,
Of lynage proud and high”:

but what does that matter, if you yourself be a poor scullion!

In a word, the End of Philosophy cannot be the acquisition or possession of anything external or extrinsical. A man might be Grand Duke of Terra Cognita, and a most unphilosophical, wretched and paltry person to boot. These things are obvious.

Nor can it be Moral Indifference.—Nor can the End of Philosophy be the attainment of a state of moral neutrality or indifference towards their fellow-creatures, as some writers actually suggest. For instance, in their Introduction to Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, Messrs. Greene and Grose speak approvingly of Hume as one “who had neither any twist of vice nor any bias for doing good, but was a philosopher because he could not help it.”² To me, I must confess that a “philosopher” without

¹ *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 84–85.

² *Works*, vol. i. p. 2. Prof. Mackintosh writes in a similar strain about Hegel:—Nothing, he says, that Hegel has said, “will by the manner of his saying it, make any one the braver for reading it, or the better for remembering it. *The philosopher has almost, if not altogether, eaten out the man.*” *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 5. If it be the function of the philosopher to eat out the man, the fewer philosophers we have the better—clearly.

"any bias for doing good," would be a very repulsive monster, and I should rather expect to find him in a convict prison than in the Wise Man's Chair. It seems to be a gross error to speak invidiously of a "bias for doing good," and suggests to me the sneer of a foolish and profane person. Not only ought every man, worthy of the name, be possessed of the "bias" which these "philosophers" appear to condemn, but the very mainspring of his life as a man—a *thinking* being, should be an ambition to do good. What sort of a *thinker* can the creature be, who has no desire to do good! Further, the search for, and the discovery of, truth, are themselves a "good" of so fundamental a character, that it is presupposed in every estimate of "the good."

Nor can it be intellectual activity merely.—Nor, again, can the Object or End of Philosophy be mere intellectual activity, as so many writers appear to have fancied. Seneca is reported to have said *sordet cognita veritas*. I think he was wrong. A known truth of any worth retains its full significance and interest. It might well be said that we don't continue to feel excited over achievement or discoveries; but far better than continuing to be excited over them, we are *quoad* those discoveries, satisfied; and besides the satisfaction which we derive from them, they may become stepping-stones for the acquisition of further truth.

It is surprising to find that this notion which assumes that the End of Philosophy is intellectual activity merely, should have been so widely entertained. Pascal says of men that in life, "*ils croient chercher sincèrement le repos, et ne cherchent en effet que l'agitation. . . . Rien ne nous plaît que le combat, mais non pas la victoire. . . . Ainsi dans le jeu, ainsi dans la recherche de la vérité. On aime à voir dans les disputes, le combat des opinions; mais de contempler la vérité trouvée point du tout. Nous ne cherchons jamais les choses, mais la recherche des choses.*"¹ With much respect

¹ *Detached Moral Thoughts*, 34.

for Pascal, this, I think, is a very superficial view of the matter. Ask any prize-fighter if he does not prefer the victory and the stakes to the mauling! Ask Wellington if he did not prefer the winning of the Battle of Waterloo to the weary day's mortal strife over it! Ask a Newton if he did not prefer his discoveries to the labours which they entailed! Ask Nansen, or any other rational explorer, if he would not *aime a voir* the North Pole much more heartily than the prolonged struggling with snow and ice and polar bears to get to it!

Richter writes in the same vein,—“It is not the goal but the course which makes us happy.” “If,” says Malebranche, “I held truth captive in my hand, I should open my hand and let it fly, in order that I might again pursue and capture it?” Doubtful. It is as if one said that if he had toiled for and obtained a million sterling, he would throw it away in order that he might have the pleasure of toiling for it again. In any case, so would not I, I can tell you. Shakespeare opines:—

“All things that are,
Are with more spirit chaséd than enjoyed.”

Sir William Hamilton holds the same notion. Speculative truth, he declares, “is only pursued, and is only held of value for the sake of intellectual activity. . . . Every votary of science is wilfully ignorant of a thousand established facts,—of a thousand which he might make his own more easily than he could attempt the discovery of even one. But it is not knowledge,” he says, “it is not truth that he principally seeks; he seeks the exercise of his faculties and feelings. . . . Thus it is in play; thus it is in hunting; thus it is in the search of truth; thus it is in life. The past does not interest; the present does not satisfy; the future alone is the object which engages us”:¹—all of which opinions seem to exhibit a partial

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. pp. 10–13, 23.

and, more or less, erroneous analysis and account of the question at issue. In all duty done,—in all work well accomplished, it seems to me that there is satisfaction *quoad hoc*. Sir William seems to interpret the *wish to do more* as dissatisfaction with *what has been done*: surely a mistake? Indeed, according to such opinions it would appear that Tantalus eternally trying to get a drink and never succeeding, would be a right type or symbolism of the Philosopher and his pursuits! Solomon, I think, took the right view of the matter when he said—"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick";—"The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul":—unmistakably so; and the Apostle Paul, breathing, perhaps, a sigh of relief over the thought, declared—"There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Even the popular proverb—"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," seems to destroy the perpetual-activity hypothesis of the writers quoted.

In all serious pursuits, we have some positive or substantive End in view.—The fact seems to be that in all our serious pursuits, we have some positive or substantive End in view. Xenophon has well expressed this doctrine:—"Those who are desirous to be able speakers do not exercise themselves in the art that they may never cease haranguing, but in hopes that by prevailing upon men by the power of their eloquence, they may effect many objects of great consequence. They who exercise themselves in martial affairs do not labour in them that they may never cease fighting; but they judge that by making themselves skilful in military matters, they shall acquire great riches, great happiness and great honour to themselves and to their country."¹ So Aristotle:—"Happiness seems also to consist in leisure; for we are busy in order that we may have leisure; and we go to war in order that we may be at peace. . . . No one chooses war nor makes preparation for war for the sake of war; for a man would

¹ *Cyrop.*, Bk. i. c. 5, 9.

be thought perfectly defiled with blood if he made his friends enemies in order that there might be battles and massacres.”¹ Locke also takes this view:—“Labour for Labour-sake is against Nature,”²—we labour for an End other than itself. Moreover, the failure to attain that End—if it be one of real value, yields us disappointment and sometimes pain and misery. Consult the unsuccessful man—even from the fisherman who has toiled all night and caught nothing, to the Hero who has, it may be, toiled for a lifetime, and seen, perhaps, no fruit of his labours. A man does not devote himself to the study of languages for the sake of the intellectual activity which it involves! for the pleasure of laboriously conning over declensions, conjugations, etc.! Franklin didn’t set out on his Arctic Expedition for the pleasure of a sail in cold weather! Livingstone did not go to Africa for the sake of having a long tramp through tangled forests! “Sister Dora” did not devote her life to hospital work for the activity’s sake, nor for the mere “exercise of her faculties and feelings”! Of course not; but in each and every one of these pursuits, or in any other serious pursuit, the Agent, if he be a person of *nous*, sets before himself a substantive End or Purpose; and if that End be not attained, it is a source of more or less vexation to him. I seriously learn a trade, or enter into a business or profession, for the important End of making an honourable living; I try to save money for my children for the honourable and beneficent purpose of providing for their wants and starting them on the Road of Life; I study a science with the laudable desire of mastering it and, perhaps, of advancing some other purpose. Indeed, as already noted, it seems impossible to mention

¹ *Nic. Ethics*, Bk. x. c. vii. 7; and *Politics*, Bk. vii. c. xiv. In c. iii., however, he says that “happiness consists in virtuous activity”; also c. xiii. which is not satisfactory. Take the martyr at the stake! But he returns to the right view in Bk. viii. c. iii. on labour and rest.

² *Conduct of the Understanding*, 15.

any serious enterprise that is not undertaken with a substantive Object or End in view.

But in saying this, I do not lose sight of the fact that though the external object be missed, it may well be that the subjective results,—the mental and moral training and discipline resulting from the pursuit of that object, are, in themselves, high—perhaps the highest of attainments. Men do not even go to the moors in August for the sole purpose of enjoying the sport which they afford, but also for the substantive purpose of restoring, or maintaining, or promoting physical health.

That those who hold the ceaseless-activity hypothesis are wrong, is also abundantly evident, I think, from the consideration that if they were right in their view, our Darwins and Haeckels, our Cliffords and Weissmans, together with all the wildest and most mischievous speculators known to the world, would have as clearly attained the End of Philosophy, as the most sober, profound and beneficent labourers in the Field of Science.

The true End of Philosophy, to attain Perfection of Being.—How then do we stand? "There is," says John Ruskin, "an ideal form of every herb, flower and tree. It is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease."¹ If of every herb, flower and tree, how much more of every human soul! Of King David it was written that "he waxed greater and greater, for the Lord of Hosts was with him." Something like this should be the history of all earnest men.

Bearing this in mind, what, then, is the substantive End of Philosophy? I answer—to attain the Perfection of our Being.² What is the Perfection of our Being?

¹ *Modern Painters*, Pref. to Second Edition, vol. i. p. 28.

² Had this, the right End of Philosophy been kept in view, it could never have been called by any bad names—*nomen insolentissimum*, *nomen invidiosum*, and so forth (v. Hamilton: *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 48). With

In everyday life, observe, the useful—in the large sense, is the good; the good, the useful. By “utility,” here, I mean all perfection; not merely that which relates to pots and pans. A thing is valuable in proportion to its usefulness; so is a person. In proportion as a thing is useless, it is valueless; whilst in so far as it may be deleterious, it is frankly recognised by all sensible persons as a nuisance—a thing to be removed and destroyed; and in the case of a person, to be fined, or imprisoned, or cast into a lunatic asylum; or punished or restrained in some way or other.

Let a commercial traveller go into a shop or a house and offer to sell unwearable clothes, very short blankets, knives or scissors that won't cut anything, poisonous meats or drinks of any kind, and the sensible shopkeeper or housekeeper will request him to go away. If our enterprising commercial traveller refuses to go away, the sensible housekeeper or shopkeeper will probably become irate with him, and feel disposed to use a certain amount of violence against him, or to hand him over to the guardians of the peace; and in so doing, he would be acting according to the very plain dictates of Common Sense—that most sacred and precious of all our endowments. This is as plain as a deal-board.

In everyday or secular life, then, it clearly appears that the useful thing is the good thing; the good, the useful thing. So is it, I repeat, with regard to persons. We all know what a good bootmaker means—namely, a person who unites sound knowledge, sound material and sound workmanship in the manufacture of his boots. So with artisans and craftsmen of all kinds—tailors, hatters, smiths, joiners, cabinetmakers, wheelwrights, etc. The greatest Hatter in the world is indubitably that person who

Kant, “the business of Philosophy, in the true sense of the word, is to answer three questions: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) What may I hope for?” Wallace: *Kant*, p. 61.

puts the best judgment, the best material, the best workmanship into his hats; the best farmer is he who puts the best judgment, the best material and the best workmanship into his farming; the best doctor, he who lays out the best judgment, the best skill and the best material upon his patient; the best sailor, he who brings the best knowledge and the best handling to the management of his ship; and so on through all the 7000 industries known to census-makers and statisticians. To these propositions there can be no rational gainsayers. The first secular glory of a man is to know his business; the second, or complementary, glory, is to execute his business in strict accordance with his knowledge.

So should it be in the intellectual and spiritual life. As Confucius says, "The perfect, the true, disengaged from all mixture, is the law of Heaven. The process of perfection which consists in using all one's efforts to discover the celestial law, the true principle of the mandate of Heaven, this is the law of man. The perfect man attains this law without external help; he has no need of meditation or long reflection to obtain it; he arrives at it with calmness and tranquillity. This is the holy man. He who is continually tending towards perfection, who attaches himself strongly to the good and fears to lose it, is the sage."¹ But what happens in this higher region of life? Generally speaking, the theories of the Schools are of no high value even to the experts; whereas a true scheme of knowledge and life should be of easy apprehension, and of the highest value to everybody concerned about it. Take your "philosopher of the absolute." Your Hegel or Fichte, for instance, as "absolutist," can tell us nothing that can possibly be of any service to us. If, in the words of Hamilton, we had faculties "equal in number to all the possible modes of existence, whether of mind or matter, still would our knowledge of mind or matter be only

¹ F. D. Maurice: *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, p. 60.

relative." (Here I would rather use the word *imperfect* than relative.) "If material existence could exhibit ten thousand phenomena, and if we possessed ten thousand senses to apprehend these ten thousand phenomena of material existence, of existence absolutely and in itself, we should be then as ignorant as we are at present."¹ In a word, all talk of the Absolute is not only absolutely useless for any good purpose, but it is absolute nonsense. The Absolutist speculatively reduces himself to a mere, impersonal deliquium.

Or take any other Futilitarian School. Your Idealist, *as* Idealist, can tell me nothing that can be of any use to me; your Materialist, *as* Materialist, can tell me nothing; your Sceptic, *as* Sceptic, nothing; your Nihilist, *as* Nihilist, nothing; your Hedonist, *as* Hedonist, nothing; your Determinist, *as* Determinist, nothing. No living wight,—no wight that is still to live, can be profited by the speculations of such persons. All these systems,—Absolutist, Idealist, etc., are wholly useless for any good purpose. Nay, worse, I fear. Such systems in so far as they operate upon mankind can only be expected to produce confusion, distraction and despair. The poor Materialist, for instance, toiling and moiling with the object of proving that he is only a machine, or of discovering for himself a piscatorial ancestry—grunting and sweating in outer darkness to prove that man was made in the image of a fish, and not in the likeness of God at all!—There's an occupation for a rational being! Such proceedings, I maintain, are not merely useless but obstructive, and calculated to produce confusion, distraction, degradation and despair.

Now, as we have seen, mankind do not, if they know it, willingly tolerate the useless, the hurtful and the hopeless as regards their bodies. Why then, in the sacred name of brains, do they not only tolerate, but hug and

¹ *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 145.

fondle the useless, the hurtful and the hopeless as regards their souls? Rightly, they will not tolerate a bottomless pot or pan to contain soup for the body; rightly, they will not, if they can help it, tolerate poisonous meats and drinks for the body. Why then, in the holy name of Common Sense, do they so freely partake of meats and drinks poisonous and deadly to their higher nature? That's a stroke of eccentricity. The seller of unsound meat for the body is, when discovered, pounced upon immediately and caught by the Police—a perfectly reasonable proceeding; but as to meats for the spirit, however useless or deleterious, or hopeless they may be, the compounder and vendor of them is quite respectfully treated and commonly regarded as a very clever fellow! There is nothing ridiculous but man.

It will never do. We should adopt the same practical attitude towards promoting the welfare of our minds as we take in promoting the advancement of our corporeal interests—which must always be of an intensely practical nature. An impractical farmer is a person not to be entrusted with land; an impractical engine-driver were worse than no engine-driver; an impractical wheelwright—one, for instance, who insisted on making three-cornered wheels, worse than no wheelwright; an impractical doctor, one to be watched by the criminal authorities; and an impractical man in the intellectual and spiritual sphere, worse than no man at all, and a nuisance to others.

It appears then, that the End of Philosophy is to attain as much knowledge as possible, and to acquire the strongest disposition to live in accordance with that knowledge; to know what is the best and to do what is the best; to have our faculties so drilled and disciplined that we may most readily know and love what is best, and to have our whole nature so harmoniously developed and controlled, that we may most easily live the highest life. Mere knowledge will not do, for, it has been truly said,

the most illiterate devil might be more knowing than man. But knowledge supported by virtue, and virtue supported by knowledge, yield the most glorious excellence.

In a word, whilst the best farmer in the world is indubitably the man who puts the best judgment, the best material and the best workmanship into his farm, the best Philosopher is no less certainly the man who puts the best judgment, the best material and the best workmanship into his Life; and strives to promote by word and deed, the circulation of all life-giving and fertilising thought and influence to the best of his ability. He who strives to do this seems to be in the way of attaining to the Perfection of his Being—the grand End of Wisdom or Philosophy.

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